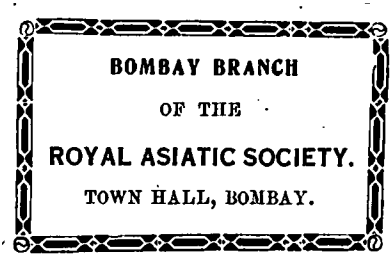
00032034



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

1239 T. C. d. 13.

ITALY,

ITS

AGRICULTURE, &c.

FROM

THE FRENCH OF MONS. CHATEAUVIEUX,

BEING

LETTERS WRITTEN BY HIM IN ITALY,

IN THE YEARS 1812 & 1813.

TRANSLATED BY

EDWARD RIGBY, ESQ. M.D.F.L. & H.S.

32034

NORWICH:

PRINTED BY BURKS AND KINNEBROOK,

FOR R. HUNTER, 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

M,DCCC,XIX.

914.5
Cha/Ita
32034

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Agriculture is the first of human arts: it is, obviously, the first recorded in the page of history. It is the oldest of human arts: it was the first offspring of necessity.

It is the most useful of human arts: individual man owes to it his subsistence; social man owes to it the first means of that intercourse, which has, for its object, the reciprocal supply of human wants; agriculture created society.

It furnished the first material of barter and exchange, and ultimately of its more convenient representative, money; agriculture created wealth.

*To agriculture is also owing the other indispensible means of social intercourse; agriculture created language: for all language, it would seem, may be traced to the earth, and to the processes carried on upon it.**

* This appears highly probable from the Rev. Mr. Whiter's curious and striking Theory of Language, developed in his Etymologicon Universale; a wonderful production of human industry, research, and intellect.

Agriculture is, moreover, the most universal of all arts; it has been practised in all ages and in all countries, that not being a country where it is not practised.

And yet agriculture is far from being the most perfect of human arts: in its progress to improvement it has been more slow than most others; it has, much less than others, profited by the general arts of civilization; it has been more tardy in the application of the principles of science, natural philosophy, chemistry, and even of that branch of knowledge which would seem to be more immediately connected with it, natural history. It has been more an art of labor than of skill, more mechanical than scientific. Nor has it been duly honored in society, for those who have practised it, have, in all countries, filled but a humble station in the world.

In no country has art been less fettered than in England; in no country have general improvements been more encouraged; in no country has greater perfection been attained in all the processes and manufactures connected with manual skill, with mechanism, and with chemistry; but during the progress of the late extraordinary improvements in these several arts, effected by the most ingenious mechanical inventions, and the most important chemical discoveries, so creditable, at once, to the talent and

the industry of the English nation, and so conducive to its general prosperity, agriculture remained for a long while stationary, nor until a recent period has the public attention been much directed towards it. The writings of a few intelligent men, among whom Tull was the most original, and Arthur Young, at one time, the most generally read; the subsequent publication of some well conducted periodical works, the creation of a national board of agriculture, the founding a professorship of agriculture in the University of Edinburgh, and the establishment of agricultural societies in several parts of the empire, have, lately had a considerable share in exciting the public attention to the subject, and, at the same time, have proved how much it stood in need of patronage.

But the more direct practical improvement in agriculture has been effected by a few individuals, among whom Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, stands most distinguished. He was the first of the great landed proprietors of this country, who, on an efficient scale, turned his attention to agriculture, and on his own estate, during a period of more than forty years, he has devoted his time, his talent, and his ample fortune, in investigating its principles and improving its practice. The results have been most important to himself and to the public; a great increase of agricultural

produce, from the conversion of extensive tracts, apparently sterile, and of very little value, into excellent corn land: a vast improvement in the value of his patrimonial estate; a great amelioration in the situation and circumstances of his tenants, and a marked improvement in their manners and respectability; a greatly increased demand for manual labor, which, within the reach of his agricultural influence, has materially bettered the poor man's condition, for never wanting employment, he never wants food; the numbers of this class have, in consequence, increased, and greatly increased, and yet, at Holkham, not in the ratio of the demand for labor, which, extraordinary as it may seem, and contrary as it is to generally received opinion, appears to increase with every added improvement in the cultivation of the earth.

British agriculture, it must, however, be acknowledged, has been marked by two striking eras, the introduction of the turnip culture and that of the drill system, the great value of which, and the extensive improvement they have admitted of, are most conspicuously apparent in the fields of Holkham.

The turnip culture was a most beneficial improvement on the system of fallows, formerly considered not only as requisite for the due cleaning the land, but as indispensible to the producing

that periodical rest which was formerly thought necessary for its restoration from a state of exhaustion, supposed to be unavoidable after the growth of a few crops. It became valuable, in the first instance, by giving a crop where there was none before, and thereby preventing the loss of a season; and without any diminution of the means of cleaning the land, afforded by whole-year fallows, this crop was, also, of peculiar value to a farm, enabling it to support and fatten a much larger quantity of stock, and consequently to accumulate a much greater quantity of manure, the true source of the amelioration of the land.

The drill system originated with Tull, who having conceived a theory, which induced him to suppose that the beneficial effect of manure consisted, principally, in its rendering the particles of the earth so friable and minutely divisible as to admit of their being absorbed by the roots of plants, imagined this state of pulverization might be equally induced by the mechanical division of the soil, and which, he conceived, would be effected by more frequent ploughings, and other means of well stirring the earth, as well after as before the seed is sown. To accomplish this he deposited the seed in parallel lines, at such a distance as allowed the intermediate space to be ploughed, or otherwise turned over, during the growth of the crops. His theory proved untrue,

but his practice was excellent, for not only were the weeds more effectually destroyed than by any system of hand-hoeing before in use, but the growth of the plants was much accelerated and perfected. This was, however, obviously effected on a principle very different to his theory, not by the absorption of the divided particles of the earth itself, but by the absorption of the different principles which the earth never fails to evolve, or attract from the atmosphere, in a more than ordinary degree, every time it is turned over and well stirred, as water, caloric, several gases, and other principles detected and defined by modern chemistry; and which absorption was also evidently greatly increased by the multiplication of the roots of the plants, necessarily produced by their being occasionally divided, in these processes, by the plough or horse hoe. The quick and more perfect vegetation of grain, when deposited immediately after the land has been stirred by the plough, is a well known confirmation of this general principle.

The mechanism of this system included different implements for sowing the seed, earthing up the plants, cleaning and stirring the soil; and as the first and principal process consisted in depositing the grain, and was effected by an apparatus worked by horses, and constructed so as to drop the seed regularly in lines, which

were drawn or drilled, it was called a drill machine, and the process acquired the name of drilling.*

To the early adoption of this system, its gradual developement, and extended application, the Holkham agriculture owes much of its excellence, and particularly its extraordinary improvement in the culture of the Swedish turnip, bringing with it the beneficial consequences of a more perfected process of cleaning and stirring the land, of an increase of stock, and of a greater accumulation of manure.

To the influence of this system must, also, be principally attributed what, of recent improvement, has been effected in the general agriculture of the country; for in some parts of it, it has certainly been judiciously adopted, and continues to be skilfully and successfully practised; but unfortunately this has hitherto been but to a limited extent, a considerable portion of the island, I regret to say, still remaining in a state of inefficient cultivation. We should not, otherwise, have to remark, that in the rich soil of Essex the wretched practice of fleet ploughing and whole-year fallows, is still pertinaciously continued; that the county of Sussex, one of the most

* To drill, from drillen, Dutch. Among other meanings Johnson gives that of "to draw slowly," in which sense he quotes Tompson as using it.—*T.*

southern counties, should, in its agriculture, be, at least, half a century behind almost all others; that so naturally fertile a county as Cheshire, should be but just emerging from what may be called the negative system of more than a century back; that millions of acres should still be actually lying waste, and that in the last year 3,337,500 quarters of corn should have been imported into this country, not less to the injury of the merchant than of the British corn grower, and which having been paid for with the enormous sum of £13,271,629, must have been felt as no inconsiderable national loss.

Considering the publicity of all agricultural operations, and the efforts which, for some years past, have, in various ways, been made to direct the public attention to the most improved processes, and more particularly considering the liberal and extraordinary opportunity annually afforded to the public by Mr. Coke, of examining every process and improvement at Holkham, and that many thousand individuals, of all ranks and professions, and from different parts of the empire, exclusive of those more immediately engaged in agriculture, have witnessed and appreciated them; it has been not less matter of wonder than of regret, that a system of improvement, so excellent and practicable, should have extended so slowly.

This may, however, perhaps, be accounted for; it may, probably, be traced to a principle belonging to our nature, whose influence may be intended to prevent the inconveniences arising from precipitancy, and too sudden changes in systems and establishments, in which society, at large, is much interested. Improvements which effect material changes in long established customs, have, under all circumstances and in all countries, ever been slowly and reluctantly admitted. It requires no little effort to quit the common routine of practice, and still more to relinquish long maintained opinions. The general circumstances affecting agriculture are, moreover, little favorable to great, and more especially to sudden, alterations: the farmer is not so much within reach of information as the merchant and manufacturer; he has not, like those who reside in towns, the means of ready intercourse and constant communication with others engaged in the same occupation. He lives retired, his acquaintance is limited, and but little varied; and unless in the habit of reading, he is little likely to acquire any other knowledge of his art than what is traditionary, what is transmitted from father to son, and limited, in its application, to his own immediate neighbourhood.

These are, certainly, obvious obstacles to agricultural progression, but they will, in time, be

gradually overcome. They can, however, only be opposed by continuing to keep up the public attention to agriculture. The subject cannot, therefore, be brought forward too frequently, and the means of exciting attention to it cannot be too varied and extensive. Facility should be given to every species of agricultural information; it should be sought for even in other countries, and in other languages. The extended and continued intercourse between England, and almost every part of the Continent, since the peace, must have afforded ample means of practical agricultural information; and among the many intelligent Englishmen now abroad, and who are so competent to acquire and communicate information on every important subject, it is to be hoped that some will direct their attention to foreign agriculture.

The work of M. Chateauvieux is a very favorable specimen of such a communication, and well calculated to serve as an example to those who are similarly situated. It has excited much attention on the Continent, and, perhaps, not the less so, for having been addressed to so scientific a person as M. Charles Pictet.

Details of agricultural processes carried on in Italy, a climate so different to our own, and varying, in so many respects, from those we have been accustomed to, cannot fail of exciting some

interest; and picturesque descriptions of the scenery of such a country as Italy, will not fail to gratify every reader capable of relishing the beauties of nature. As an agricultural work, as an interesting book of travels, and even as a morceau of French literature, it would appear to have a claim on public notice. My inducement in attempting to give it an English dress was, however, principally on account of the agricultural information it contains, and which, from the interesting manner in which it is communicated, may, perhaps, attract the notice of a class of readers not likely to have their attention directed to a mere book of farming, and may therefore add somewhat to the general interest in favor of agriculture, which, it would seem, is, at this time, so desirable to promote.

With respect to the translation I have endeavored to give the author's meaning correctly. In an attempt to do more than this, I should, probably, have failed, for it appears to be less difficult to write an original work, than to give to a translation the character of originality. On the other hand, in giving a close translation, it is, obviously, difficult to avoid the peculiarities of the original language; and I fear, therefore, the reader will, on this account, have to excuse not only occasional gallicisms, but, very probably,

some more serious errors in the immediate translation.

There are, also, I observe, a few literal errors, but I have not brought them into a list of errata, as they will, at once, be recognized as mistakes of the pen or the press.

E. R.

Norwich, June 14, 1819.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

LETTER		PAGE
1.	—Turin, May 12, 1813	1
2.	—Asti, July 10	14
3.	—A la Mandria de Chivas, July 20	32
4.	—Parma, September 10	39
5.	—Sarzanna, September 20	48
6.	—Florence, May 4, 1813	71
7.	—Pisa, May 15	87
8.	—Sienna, May 25	94
9.	—Rome, June 10	107
10.	—Rome, June 20	116
11.	—Albano, July 4	128
12.	—Velletri, July 6	148
13.	—Terracino, July 13	163
14.	—Naples, July 18	182
15.	—Naples, July 25	192
16.	—Portici, August 2	206
17.	—Rome, September 10	216
18.	—Perugia, September 25	242
19.	—Ferrara, October 5	254
20.	—Bellinzona, October 20	274
21.	—Geneva, November 1	289
22.	—Geneva, November 10	311
23.	—Geneva, November 15	336

LETTER I.

TURIN, MAY 12, 1812.*

Sir,

TWENTY years have elapsed since I visited Italy. This beautiful country had presented itself to my imagination as a land of enchantment, separated from the rest of the world by almost inaccessible abysses. I expected to find, beyond the Alps, not only nature, but a people and manners of a peculiar character; and in taking leave of my friends I was impressed with the feelings I should have experienced had I been going to visit some unknown country.

I have just passed the Alps, but without the emotions with which they before inspired me. The majestic roads which have been lately opened

* These letters were written when the French were masters of Italy.

among their precipices, have destroyed the natural barriers of Italy. These immense works are, certainly, striking marks of the progress of civilization; but in levelling the rocks they have lowered the Alps, and dispelled the enchantment of Meillerie. These mountains have ceased to connect terror with their name, and no longer interpose the barrier which separated different nations. Thus approximated, they have produced an easy communication, which effaces all original national character; similar manners are acquired with similar wants and habits. The feeling of nationality is gradually lost in the community of the usages of life, and in a short time, the traveller, who shall visit every part of Europe, will retain the impression that he is still in the midst of the same people.

This feeling impressed me on my arrival at Turin, so striking, in every thing I saw, was the resemblance to my own country, that I fancied myself in a large and beautiful French city. It seemed as if the dresses, the decorations, the shops, the promenades, and even the placards in the streets, had been sent from Paris with the Restaurateurs and the Journal des Modes. It is the same with the various interests which affect society; the laws which influence them, the institutions which direct them, the hopes and fears arising from them, proceed alike from this great central source of motion, which perpetually attracts and reflects the

elements that compose the civilization of the present period.

What, then, will be the result of this amalgamation of different people, of this uniformity of manners, of this general improvement, which gives to every interest a similar tendency? Will the extinction of national physiognomy, over the whole Continent, effect that of the rivalry of nations, and destroy the specific consciousness which distinguishes each particular state and people; and which is not less individually theirs than respiration? I can scarcely suppose it, there is something repulsive in the idea; and when I see state decrees published on the banks of the Tiber, I feel conscious that I am on Roman land, and not in the country of the Celts, or on the banks of the Indre or the Adour. Nations without history or tradition may lose their characteristic distinction; but those on whom the lapse of ages has conferred lasting fame, unconsciously, preserve a character which is the essence of their nationality; and I much doubt whether decrees can destroy this character, or annihilate their history.

The almost universal ruin of the feudal system, of castes and privileges, must, however, by proclaiming the equality of rights to all citizens, tend to destroy the influence of individual power, and substitute the influence of law, that is to say, of general power. Hence distinctions no longer be-

longing to rank, become exclusively the appendages of place, fortune, and talent, the only levers by which individuals can raise themselves above the common classes. It is easy to see that from this period every interest, and the tendency of every action in life, will be directed to the attainment of these distinctions; and as the means of success are universally the same, the whole European population will find itself, almost unconsciously, inspired by the same genius.

Political order and legislation, in their nature, stationary, will give way to the influence of new manners, arising from the progress of civilization. The whole train of consequences resulting from this general revolution can, however, be only ascertained at its completion; but it is, in the mean time, interesting to note the facts which mark this great change in the social order.

Italy is one of the European countries in which the general disposition of the present age is most conspicuous. The destruction of the feudal system, and of all its vestiges, has not been effected, as in France, by frightful acts of violence. Time, information, and the influence of circumstances, have created opinions sanctioned by the right of conquest. It is easy to observe, in Italy, the developement which the spirit of the times has produced, and this is a point of view which, at present, excites much interest.

Its old aristocracies fell at the first blast, and its petty sovereignties have disappeared with the pompous retinues which decorated their imbecility. Extensive territorial arrangements, after the lapse of twenty ages, have animated the Italians with the hope of uniting in one nation. They have obtained one uniform system of laws, and are actuated by one general impulse. Notwithstanding the resistance of old habits, they have been extricated from all that impeded the general progress of the social revolution, and been incorporated in the squadrons of the most formidable armies. Surprized to find themselves thus situated, they became soldiers, less, probably, from choice than from necessity, and under new standards, and bearing no name but that of Frenchmen, they have fought with a bravery which gained them the esteem of the army, and proved that they were not more strangers to the perils of war than to the delights of tranquillity.

Such changes in the destiny of this people have necessarily had considerable influence on their habits and interests. Sent away, in great numbers, by the conscription, or charged with the general concerns of the war, and the administration of a great state, the Italians have spread themselves over the whole of Europe. They have acquired, among strangers, new manners and information, whilst these strangers have brought with them into

Italy new institutions and regulations before unknown to the Italians.

A government, decisive and prompt in the execution of its measures, has established, in Italy, an order, a police, and a correctness very different from the ancient customs of that country. While the conscription took off the idle and superfluous part of the population, which encumbered the streets, the higher classes, impoverished by the war, were obliged to adopt a retired life and domestic manners, to which their morals had completely indisposed them. The suppression of convents, whilst it assigns to mothers the education of their children, has called forth, in the instinct of maternal affection, that attention to propriety which is gradually banishing the licentiousness of manners so disgraceful to the women of Italy, and the immorality of which no influence can sanction, but that of long-established habit. A domestic spirit will thus, perhaps, eventually prevail in Italy.

This change in manners is not, however, become a general habit, which public opinion no longer censures. A considerable time must elapse before the morals of a whole nation can be reformed, but the change is obvious, and many circumstances concur to produce it. It is distinctly perceptible that a class has arisen which was formerly unknown, and which is already much diffused; a class devoted to an active life, in the army, in the

public offices, in business, or in the cultivation of science. The individuals who compose it are young, ardent, and eager for information, which they pursue and obtain. Unlike their fathers, they no longer confine themselves to a limited circle, but belong to the general civilization of Europe.

The fine arts and poetry have, at the same time, ceased to be objects of pursuit to the Italians. They are wholly neglected by men of talents. These talents are entirely directed to natural science and political information. No one mentions the pictures of the two only remaining artists. Frederici alone, ineffectually, still struggles to keep up the reputation of dramatic writing; Monti has gathered the last palm of poetry; and the melodious strains of Veluti are, for the last time, delighting the shores of Naples. Like an exhausted soil which no longer produces fruit and flowers, the old territory of Italy seems tired of bringing forth poems and monuments of art. One great man monopolizes the reputation of this ancient glory; but he is laboring at the tomb in which his own ashes will repose, and the genius of the arts, which for twenty ages, rendered Italy illustrious, will descend with Canova into the sepulchre which he has been building for himself.

It is now evident that the general impulse has assumed a direction remote from the regions of fancy, and approaching the spirit of order and ar-

rangement in business. Its influence is seen in the desire of effecting the improvement which arises from intellect and economy, and in short, of exercising its powers on subjects useful to the individual or to society. The motive which excites to this is universally diffused; it is the consciousness of possessing adequate means, united to a certain self-esteem which the Italians had formerly forfeited, and which, within the last ten years, they have recovered by their exertions and their blood.

This influence in favor of the spirit of order and of improvement, in public and private institutions, was immediately directed to agriculture. As Italy had few manufactures, and its ports were, by the war, shut against foreign commerce, its industry had no extensive resources but in the increase of its agricultural productions. Even this improvement was limited, for Italy, distinguished as it had been by its ancient civilization, had already passed the different stages of public prosperity; it had, for a long time, adopted the ingenious mode of culture by assolemens, (or an uninterrupted rotation of crops), an extensive system of irrigation, and the most approved methods of rural economy. Its excellent and abundant agricultural productions sell at a price favorable to the consumer, but too high to admit of extensive exportation. Thus the basis of its general economy seems fixed by a maximum already attained, and much benefit cannot be ex-

pected from destroying the present balance of this industry, for the purposes of introducing new articles of production, which would, probably, remain without purchasers.

A renovation of men was more requisite in Italy than a renovation of things. Of this you will be convinced, if I succeed in describing the rural usages of its different regions, not only by establishing the facts which indicate the public wealth, but their influence on the population and its prosperity. I will especially endeavor to exhibit the local physiognomy of the varied and picturesque scenery of Italy; for at the present period of the history of the world, the deformity or the beauty of nature, supposed to be a mere sport of the creation, is much more than one would imagine, the effect of human industry, which, in the different ages of the earth, has embellished or disfigured its surface. No place so strikingly exhibits this fearful power of man as this ancient Ausonia. Every civilized age seems here to have offered its gifts, and impressed its seal. Here the fields, surrounded with elms, are covered with vines, which seem to have been planted to grace the festivals of Bacchus. At a later period the olive tree was imported from Greece, or Asia; and its evergreen foliage has converted arid hills into thickets, uninjured by the seasons. In other places countless rills have been formed by an extensive distribution of the water of

a single river; whilst time has depopulated the plains of Rome, and changed its groves into forests, and its fields into deserts. Every where nature has been transformed by art. Nothing having been left untouched but the volcanic mountains, the approach to which is defended by burning streams, spreading destruction around, as if to keep at a distance the laborious industry of man, and impress him with a respectful awe.

I shall not advert to those parts of Italy, which have been described by so many travellers. I shall say nothing either of buildings, monuments, or cities, or of the arts by which they have been decorated. I will give its rural history; I will inform you how they cultivate the fields, how they get in their harvests. I will endeavor to describe the scenery of this beautiful country, such as I really saw it, or such as I fancied I saw it, for travellers deceive themselves even when they speak only of objects which immediately strike the eye. But that there may be some order in my recital, I shall divide the different parts of Italy into as many regions as correspond to the differences I observed in their situation, their aspect, and their rural economy.

Italy may be divided into three regions, according to the three different systems of agriculture which distinguish them. The difference of climate, of productions, and of rural manners, are

obvious to the traveller, and cannot but excite his notice.

The first of these regions begins near the Alps of Suza and Mont Cenis, and extends to the shores of the Adriatic. It comprehends the whole plain of Lombardy, divided, by the Po, into two almost equal parts. The fertility of the earth, in this rich plain, admits the growth of an abundant variety of productions, which succeed one another without interruption; and this admirable succession of crops has occasioned this region to be called *the Country of Cultivation by Assolement*, or the regular rotation of crops.

The second region extends over all the southern declivities of the Appenins, from the frontiers of Provence, as far as the borders of Calabria. I will call it the region of Olive Trees, or of the Canaanean cultivation. It occupies only the hills and the declivities. This eastern culture displays itself on the sides of mountains in a succession of terraces, supported by well formed walls of green turf; these wild spots being covered with many species of fruit trees. I shall say little of this culture, destitute of meadows or harvests, it having been already described in an interesting manner by M. Sismondi.* I wish I could with equal suc-

* Tableau de l'Agriculture Toscane, par M. Sismondi, à Genève et à Paris.—There is a very respectful reference to

cess, describe the rural economy of the third division, which I will call *the Region of insalubrious Air*, or of the patriarchal cultivation. It extends along the Mediterranean from Pisa to Terracino, and includes all the plains which spread themselves between the sea and the first chain of the Appenins.

This region, fortunately the smallest in extent, and depopulated by the scourge of a deleterious atmosphere, has witnessed the destruction of its former prosperity, with that of its villages, its hamlets, and its agriculture. Covered with immense pastures, these lands serve only to support cattle, which, like those of the first inhabitants of the earth, form the only wealth of the shepherds to whom they belong.

Besides these three principal divisions, Italy includes, in its high mountains, rude tracts, where man exists only on the produce of the woods; and others on the banks of the Po, where countless streams water evergreen meadows, which support numerous herds, rendering the agriculture of this beautiful climate similar to that of Ireland and the northern countries.

In my next Letter I will endeavor to describe the agriculture of Piedmont. You will see how

this publication in the Edinburgh Review for March, 1817, in the able analysis of the present work.

much it adds to the natural beauty of the country, surrounded by the Alps, and enriched with the most precious gifts of nature.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

ASTI, JULY 10, 1812.

Sir,

The first agricultural region of Italy, which I pointed out in the preceding Letter, extends from the foot of the Alps to that of the Apennins, upon the immense plain formed by the recession of the waters, beginning at the passage of Suza, and terminating at the eastern boundary of Italy. This extensive country may be called the garden of Europe; it is certainly a spot peculiarly favored by nature.

The soil, formerly deposited by the water, is alike rich and deep, and forms, almost every where, a perfect level. There are no gravelly hillocks, except near the mountains; the whole plain being composed of a black mould of great fertility. The high mountains which overlook all Lombardy, pour down an immense number of streams, which art has not yet completely controled, but which, by an infinite number of irrigating canals, are conveyed in so many various directions, that there are scarcely any farms or

meadows which have not the benefit of a canal and a sluice.

This luxurious irrigation being applied in a most delicious climate, unites with the influence of a southern sun, to produce all the phænomena of the most vigorous vegetation.

These extraordinary natural advantages have, during a long period, produced, in Lombardy, an immense population and all its consequences, such as the approximation of cities, an increase of markets, and excellent roads leading to them from the different parts of the country. The land itself is also subdivided into a great number of small properties; in the centre of each of which is a farm-house. The soil of these fields is improved by great skill, and so perfectly cultivated that neither space nor time are lost. The crops are inclosed by lines of fruit trees, of different kinds, intermixed with mulberry trees, poplars, and oaks; and that the benefit of these trees may not be limited to the shade they produce, they support vines, the branches of which, spreading in all directions, form domes or hang down in festoons.

Such is the luxurious growth of the plantations throughout almost all Lombardy, that the eye of the traveller cannot penetrate their thickness. The horizon is concealed from his view, and he perceives it only in passing through them. This succession of picturesque scenery, constantly gratify-

ing the imagination with something unexpected; the beautiful verdure; the numberless dwellings, uniting elegance with convenience; the shaded fields so peculiarly rural and so admirably cultivated, exhibit a contrast and a harmony which no other country presents in an equal degree. We do not, indeed, find here the extensive and monotonous vegetation of India, nor the vast cultivation extending over the uniform plains of the north; nor do we see the rude scenery, in which the valleys of Switzerland display their freshness, but we see a country in which all these different characters seem to combine to form one interesting landscape.

Such are the fields which Lombardy has so judiciously appropriated to agriculture. The art is there very simple, because it has attained considerable perfection, and because its excellent processes have been long established, and become habitual to the farmer. The abundant population, and the variety of agricultural productions, have necessarily occasioned a subdivision of these farms; which must ever be the case in every fertile country, the cultivation of which demands many little attentions, which a resident family can alone bestow; there are few farms, therefore, in Lombardy which exceed sixty acres,* as there are also few which have less than ten.

* The acre is 48,000 square feet, French measure, and is therefore to the English acre very nearly as 5 to 4.

These farms are all the property of the higher classes, and of the inhabitants of cities, in consequence of their being the only possessors of capital; there is scarcely a single peasant proprietor, for the land is cultivated by metayers, who, for their labor, receive half of the profit. This custom is almost universal; a lease at a fixed rent being extremely rare.

Thence, although Lombardy would seem by nature adapted to cultivation on a large scale, it has become, in reality, in consequence of its social arrangements, a country of small farms.

More clearly to exhibit the different processes of this agriculture, I will describe the arrangement and rural economy of the excellent farm of Santenas. Situated about ten miles from Turin, beyond the hills which border on the Po, we arrive at it after passing that of Montcallier. On the summit of this eminence we pass the chateau where the royal family formerly resided. It is no longer habitable; and nothing remains of its former grandeur, but the striking scene which surrounds it. From the terrace of the castle may be seen the various windings of the river, through the country. On its banks are numerous plantations, which conceal from the view many of the farms and villages with which they are covered. On the confines of these plains rise the Alps and Apennins, forming a most magnificent amphitheatre. These

mountains seem destined, perpetually, to guard the approach to these happy valleys. We are, however, deceived in considering these natural ramparts as lines of real defence, for experience teaches us that the earth has scarcely any natural obstacles which can resist the courage, perseverance, and genius of man.

I passed some days at Santenas, among its groves and orchards, and observed the skilful methods by which they are cultivated. They are so similar throughout Piedmont, that a sketch of this will give you an idea of the whole.

It comprehends a considerable extent, and is cultivated in four different farms. It runs along the borders of a canal, which alternately receives and distributes its water to the fields. The banks are shaded by lines of alders, poplars, and trees of different kinds, whose great height would seem to protect the whole domain from hurricanes. Under these woods grow numberless shrubs and flowers, which were expanding as I walked among them one evening in May. The dew, which is here more abundant in moisture than in France, covered them with drops, and by its weight bowed down their fragrant heads. Hay was making in the adjoining meadow, and its fragrance mixing with that of the roses and the orange flowers, added an indescribable charm to the beauty of this verdant scene.

The chateau is situated at one extremity of the estate. Before it is a rich lawn, watered by the canal, and grouped with trees and shrubs; and this is kept in the hands of the proprietor. At the extremity, opposite, is the first farm-house; the roofs of which are seen rising over the beautiful orchard which borders the meadow, and whilst it offers the inducement of a walk from the house, is, at the same time, an improvement to the landscape.

This farm, like all others in Lombardy, displays an extent and a richness in buildings, scarcely known in any other country in Europe. Constructed of red bricks, and uniting strength with neatness, they still preserve, by the regularity and plainness of their form, a rustic character.

They extend to four equal sides of a large court. In the centre of one of these rises a building of two stories, which has a striking effect, from the justness of its proportions. The lower story serves to lodge the farmer, and store his provisions; the upper one is his granary. A line of buildings extends from each side of the centre, terminating this front of the court. These are only one story high, and contain two stables, one for oxen and another for cows. They communicate internally with each other. The stables are twelve feet high; are arched and plastered to prevent dust falling on the cattle. Nothing can be neater or better arranged than these stables, where the cattle having

plenty of litter to lie upon, shew, by their gentleness, the great care which is taken of them.

On each of the three other sides of the court is a portico, from twenty to twenty-four feet wide, and from fifteen to sixteen feet high; the roof of which is supported, from within, by a range of columns, at the same distance from each other as from the wall, so that the portico, from pillar to pillar, is divided into so many perfect squares.

On the ground, in the extensive space within these porticos, are placed all the fodder, the straw, and the products of the farm; and also the carts and other agricultural implements. Half of the court is paved, the other is an area to thresh the corn upon. To secure the purpose of cleanliness, the dung of the cattle is thrown on the outside of the court, which exhibits, among its symmetrical columns, a whole so regular and commodious, and a system of such care and good order, that our dirty and ill-arranged farms can convey no adequate idea of.

This is a perfect model of all the farm-houses in Lombardy, with nearly their dimensions, and should be that of every one in Europe; for it is a plan which affords the greatest room with the least extent of building; is best adapted to arrange and secure the crop, and is, at the same time, the most economical, and the least exposed to accidents by fire. To build such a house requires, indeed, a

considerable quantity of bricks, but every proprietor has the means of making them himself: he prepares all the necessary materials, and the workmen build it by contract. The work is neither so difficult, nor so expensive as might be supposed, and the necessity for it does not often recur.

The outward walls are every where covered with vines, the coarse grapes of which, indeed, produce only an ordinary wine, but the farmer consumes it, and custom makes it palatable to him. An outer-door opens from the dwelling-house into the garden; which is separated from the ploughed land by a hedge, and ornamented with fig trees, shrubs, and flowers. Under the porticos are large gates, which open to several roads, leading to the different parts of the farm, and forming its divisions.

The part of the estate which borders on the canal, is a homestall meadow, watered by irrigation, and in which vegetation is so vigorous that it is mowed three times in a season. The plants which grow in it are, *avena elatior*, oat grass, meadow fox-tail, ray grass, plantain, and different trefoils. The meadow land usually occupies one-fourth of the farm; the three other parts are arable. They are divided by rows of trees; principally by mulberry trees, sometimes by maples and cherry trees, which support the vine, and increase the produce without occupying more space.

The whole of this farm includes about sixty acres. and having gone through it we pass a road shaded by mulberry trees, which leads to the second farm, which is, in every respect, like the first, and from this to the third; these, together with that in the owner's occupation, and some woods, form one of the beautiful estates of Piedmont.

In each of these farms is the family of a metayer, the same often successively passing from father to son. They consider it as a patrimony, and never think of renewing the lease, but go on from generation to generation, on the same terms, without writings, or registries. Under these circumstances the Cheptel, or stock in cattle,* belongs to the proprietor, but the metayer receives the profit, paying a fixed rent, which is reckoned at half the net produce of the meadow land, or about forty francs an acre; but he takes the produce of the clover without any rent. All the other articles of produce, corn, maize, wine, hemp, silk, &c. are divided in kind, in the presence of the steward.

This contract is very advantageous to the proprietor, who, paying only the taxes, receives a fixed rent for his grass land, and a clear moiety of all the

* Cheptel or Chepteil, is thus defined in Le Dictionaire de l'Academie. Terme de Jurisprudence; Bail de bestiaux dont le profit doit se partager entre le preneur et le bailleur. The letting of cattle, the profit of which is divided between the tenant and landlord.—*T.*

gross produce of his estate; on the value of which he is enabled to speculate, so as to sell at the most favorable time; for having to make no disbursements on account of the farm, he is, with respect to his crops, in the situation of a merchant; and it is seldom that he does not profit by it. But this system can take place only in a country where the small extent and compactness of farms admit of their being cultivated by the metayer's family; where the labor is done by oxen, the rearing and fatting of which are a source of profit to the farmer, instead of an annual expence being incurred by the use of horses; and where the climate and the fertile soil admit its being unremittingly under the plough, and allow a great variety of crops, and a considerable produce of corn. Under these circumstances, paying no fixed rent, and working with his family, he has no pecuniary advances to make. He supports his family on the inferior grains, and receives sufficient ready money from the produce of his poultry yard, and the sale of his share of the corn.

This system supplies also the markets with the greatest quantity of provisions. I state this, in contradiction to Arthur Young's opinion, who attributes this advantage exclusively to large farms: but in considering the system of farming just described, it will be obvious, in the first place, that the more farms are multiplied, the greater will be

the number of plantations, gardens, poultry yards, and the abundance of those inferior articles which are neglected, or lost, on a large farm.* In the second place, the metayer being obliged to live with economy, is careful to consume the more ordinary articles in his family, that he may be able to carry to market those which are most saleable, namely, his corn, which may be estimated at a fourth of the produce of the farm.

The landlord's share reaches him without deduction, so that, in this way, three-fourths of the gross produce of the farm are offered to sale: there is thus an increase in the total production, and much economy in the domestic consumption. I should think no country can bring so large a portion of its produce to market as Piedmont. This proportion in France should not be more than a third, considering the relation between the inhabitants of the

* It is a popular idea that the minor productions of agriculture are neglected on large farms; and the remark has been so often repeated as to be generally credited. It is, however, not only contrary to the fact, but it is an absurdity to suppose it. In proportion to the extent and productiveness of a farm, the means of rearing fowls, breeding pigs, &c. are multiplied, and not merely in an arithmetical ratio, a farm of a hundred acres affording the means of producing these articles, more than in a double proportion to one of fifty acres. The motive for attending to them being thus proportionately increased, the large farmer who neglects them must be grossly inattentive to his interest.—*T.*

towns and the country. In England it probably amounts to a half; in Switzerland it is scarcely any thing; and it is on this account that animal food is so dear there.

The number of cities is prodigiously great in Piedmont; and this country, in whose limited extent a considerable space is occupied by mountains, supplies, in corn and cattle, the Riviere of Genoa, Nice, and as far as the port of Toulon. Without being able to calculate exactly, it is clear, after these observations, that there is a superabundance of provisions in this country, a circumstance rather to be attributed to its general economy, than to its fertility, for the corn in Piedmont produces not quite six for one.

But it must be admitted, that this system is practicable only in countries where an advance of capital has, for a long period, raised agriculture to its maximum of production; where experience has established a superior system of culture, and where an eligible division of property has taken place. In all improving estates, and which, of course, require advances of capital, a fixed rent,* for a long term, can alone uphold the farmer, and enable him to lay the foundation of his future prosperity.†

* And it may be added, a moderate one.

† This excellent principle has been most judiciously and liberally acted upon, in this country, by Mr. Coke, and the result has been not only greatly advantageous both to landlord and

But it is now time to draw your attention to the practical cultivation of the farm, which I purpose to describe to you.

There are sixty acres, of which fifteen are meadow; the rest is arable, and principally sown with grain; and nearly ten acres of these are sown with clover. This crop, in addition to the hay, feeds eight oxen and thirteen cows, or young stock, of which two are young bulls, and an ordinary horse, wholly employed in going to market and threshing corn; in all twenty-two heads of cattle, about one to each acre of feed, including grass and clover. The horned cattle are of the breed of Querci, which abound throughout the south of France, Dauphiny, and Savoy. They are taller, and have shorter horns, but they have the same characteristic marks, the same clear fawn-colored hair, the same difference in figure between the male and female; the cow being small, and of an ugly shape, while the ox is large and muscular, but still not well formed.

Though there is a very large quantity of cattle in Piedmont, the farmers have not learned, after the example of the Milanese, to derive much advantage from their milk. Their cows are not good milkers; the rearing and fatting of their stock, are,

tenant, but highly so to the public, in the influence it has had in the general improvement of English agriculture.—See Holkham, its Agriculture, &c. Page 28, 3d edit.—*T.*

therefore, more estimated. In this farm a pair of oxen is, thus, brought up every year; in the third year they begin to plough with them at light work; and in the fourth and fifth year they do the strongest work: at five years old they are fatted, and sometimes sell from a thousand to eleven hundred francs, and this proves one of the farmer's greatest profits: they are fatted with *pouture*,* and finished with maize flour. For the cultivation, in short, of forty-five acres, two pair of oxen, four or five years old, are employed to do the work of two ploughs; a pair of three years old, to do lighter work; and two pair of steers, and a strong horse which threshes the corn and goes to market. Each plough thus works thirty-two acres in the season. You have, yourself, some years ago, so well described the excellent Piedmont plough, and the skill with which the active laborers manage it, that it would be superfluous to repeat it here. I cannot, however, avoid mentioning to you the method they have acquired of executing, with a single plough, all the work necessary for putting in the grain and earthing up the plants, for which,

* *Pouture.* I have not been able to ascertain the meaning of this word: it is not to be found in any French dictionary I have had access to; there is no word resembling it in Baretti's Italian dictionary, nor could an intelligent native of France, and who is a perfect master of the language, discover its signification.—*T.*

in England, so many implements have been invented. Nothing can be more perfect or neater than the hoeing and moulding up the maize, when in full growth, by a single plough, with a pair of oxen, without injury to a single plant, while all the weeds are effectually destroyed. I can, also, assure you that the potatoes, which I so much admired at Hoswyl, were not better managed than a field of twenty acres which I examined at Mandria, and which were cultivated by the plough only.

The course of husbandry is usually of four years.

First year ... Maize, with manure.
French beans.
Hemp.
Second year. Wheat.
Third year. Clover, ploughed up after the first mowing, and left fallow.
Fourth year. Wheat.

This system may be considered among the most productive, and the continued fertility of the soil, notwithstanding the repeated corn crops, proves that it may be persevered in unremittingly. This is, however, much owing to the abundance of manure produced by mowing the grass lands three times in the year, and which is wholly consumed on the arable land.

In this series the maize is considered as a preparatory crop; all the manure is reserved for it,

and the hoeing and moulding up the earth keep the land perfectly clean. Nothing can be so excellent as the crop which precedes and that which follows it. The plants arranged in right lines, and majestically displaying their yellow flowers, add, indiscribably, to the beauty of the fields of Italy.

The produce of maize is considerable; and it contributes more than any other article to the maintenance of almost the whole country population of Piedmont, who eat it under a variety of forms. In cultivating it, they mix a considerable number of French beans, of different sorts, and a quantity of hemp.

The crop of maize is harvested in September, and the land immediately prepared for putting in wheat. It is sown on narrow ridges, and earthed over by the plough, the land being clean, and having been manured in the spring. No further attention is paid to it until harvest, which takes place from the beginning of July.

As soon as the corn is dry, by being placed in heaps under the porticos of the court, and in the hot month of August, it is threshed on the floor prepared at the lower part of the court. Instead of getting it out by a number of miserable horses, as is the wretched practice in Provence, or leaving it for a year to be devoured by the mice, as is the absurd custom at Paris; it is threshed by a cylinder, drawn by a horse, and guided by a boy, while

the laborers turn over the straw with forks. This process lasts nearly a fortnight; it is yet quick and economical, and completely gets out the grain.

The clover is sown in the spring, on the wheat: the quick vegetation of Italy brings it into flower the first autumn, and it affords a good cut in October; after which it serves with the meadows for autumnal feed. In the spring it assumes a fresh verdure, grows rapidly, and is mown once, but the intense heat not admitting a second cut, it is immediately ploughed in, and the land has the benefit of a fallow, with three ploughings before the wheat is again sown.

Thus in the course of four years, there are three crops for the support of man; one fallow and two crops for the cattle. To these must be added the crop of hemp, which is sometimes considerable; that of silk, wine, of vegetables, of fruit, the produce of the farm-yard, and the profit of rearing and fatting stock.

From these details it appears that a farm of sixty acres supports a family of eight or nine persons; that it maintains twenty-two heads of cattle, of which two oxen, a cow, and two pigs, are fatted every year; that the produce of silk amounts, at least, to twenty-five Louis d'ors; that more wine is made than the consumption takes off; that the crops of maize and French beans almost maintain the laborers; and that nearly the whole crops of

corn may be carried to market, as well as a considerable quantity of the inferior articles of provision. It will hence be obvious, that in no part of the world are the economy and management of the land better understood than in Piedmont, and this explains the phenomenon of its great population, and immense export of provisions.

LETTER III.

A LA MANDRIA DE CHIVAS,
JULY 20, 1812.

Sir,

THOUGH you yourself, some years ago, have given an admirable description of Mandria, I cannot quit Piedmont without adverting to this establishment, the most extraordinary, perhaps, in Europe, and giving you some account of the result of its present agricultural operations.

You know the extent and arrangement of this great domain, which includes, in an oblong square, two thousand, six hundred acres, watered by a stream, and divided by roads into a hundred and twenty-six equal squares; one-third of which is meadow, and the rest arable land.

The object of the pastoral society charged with the management of this admirable estate, was the support and improvement of a flock of six thousand Merino sheep.

Such an undertaking was quite new in the agriculture of Piedmont, which, consisting much of watered meadows, having no fallows, nor any

uncultivated tracts, is not a sheep country. It forms, indeed, an extra work in its agriculture, and the sheep could not be supported there, if the vicinity of the Alps did not allow their pasturing five months, in the summer, on the mountains. On their return the extensive fields of Mandria afford them pasture six weeks longer; the rest of the year they feed at the manger. It thus appears that sheep are not a necessary part of the agriculture of Mandria; they consume its surplus forage in the winter, and without inconvenience they might be exchanged for other stock: they could not, even, be supported here were it not for the neighbouring Alps.

But the richness of the mountain pasture, the abundance and good quality of the winter forage, and the unceasing attention of Count Lodi, have had great influence on these animals; they have acquired a growth and forms which distinguish them from all others. More slender than those of Rambouillet, they carry as much weight, and their shapes are equally rounded and beautiful. The rams have small horns, and little fierceness in their looks; they throw off enormous fleeces; a sample of which is rather glossy, and appeared to me to resemble the electoral wool of Saxony. This excellent flock, which has, however, some rivals in those of Messrs. Laval and Cologni, in Piedmont, went on very prosperously until the year 1811,

when its progress was checked; the wool became depreciated, and from the want of sale, it was found necessary to send all the inferior sheep to the butchers, as also all the lambs not produced by the prime part of the flock. This destruction, though unfortunate for the establishment, ultimately had the advantage of improving the breed, by ridding the flock of every inferior animal.

In the economy and management of Mandria there is a trait of genius which has very much struck me, and which appears to merit attentive consideration, that it may operate as an example to those countries in which agriculture is conducted on an extensive scale. In my preceding letter I remarked, that the farms in Piedmont are much divided, and that agriculture is conducted on a small scale; but Mandria, which was an ancient royal stud, consisted of a regular and contiguous plain of two thousand six hundred acres, having only one principal house in the centre. It had thus all the requisites for cultivation on the large scale, and this had formerly been practised. But Count Lodi having appreciated all the advantages of the Piedmontese cultivation, on the small scale, has endeavored to adopt it on the immense estate of Mandria, and he seems to have accomplished it. The means which he employed are as ingenious as they appear to be simple. They consist in the subdivision of the land, and in the extraordinary regularity

with which all the different processes of labor are executed.

The soil of Mandria being homogeneous, admits the application of the same system of culture to each part of it. Count Lodi has adopted that which is generally practised in Piedmont. The course of husbandry is, therefore, as follows:

First year....Maize, with manure.
Second year..Wheat.
Third year...Clover, followed by a fallow.
Fourth year..Wheat.

On the maize land twenty acres are reserved for potatoes, intended for the sheep; and this is the only alteration he has had occasion to make.

To keep up this regularity, instead of dividing it into very large pieces, according to the common error, he has surrounded regular and equal pieces of twenty acres, with lines of elms. A drift-way, which separates every two of these squares, affords an access to the fields.

From the time this division took place, the estate seemed no longer one vast farm, but so many small ones united together, and under this character Count Lodi has considered it. Having decided on the system he should apply to it, he has not made the usual arrangement for a large farm, as respects the regulation of the laborers, and their too frequent negligence in the inferior and more remote parts of the farm. He makes sure of the

labor requisite for the perfect culture of every separate part of the estate, by calculating the amount and arranging with his workmen accordingly. Thus far all was limited to a simple calculation; but the difficulty was to put the machine in motion, which, on an immense scale, presents the multiplied action of twenty common farms. He has succeeded, by introducing a sort of military system; the government is absolute; the laborers are responsible for the work they do, and he expects from them an unvarying steadiness.

They are composed of yearly domestic servants, and of weekly day laborers. When hired they engage to submit to the established system; except at first this obligation has never been irksome to them; the habit has been, a long while, so well formed there is now no opposition to it.

The establishment provides no food; the domestics, and other workmen, arrange a mess among themselves; they are all paid in money. The first only have gardens, the extent of which is in proportion to their rank as servants, and a sufficient time is allotted for their cultivation.

The domestic servants are divided into as many classes as there are kinds of workmen: at the head of each of these is a chief or captain, who is responsible for the work. He takes his orders from the master, and distributes them to the different companies. Under him are lieutenants and cor-

porals. Thus the shepherds form a company, the herdsmen the same, as also the waggoners and the ploughmen. The laborers, as they are wanted, are placed in the different companies, and are thus under the orders of their respective officers and corporals. All the works begin and terminate regularly at the sound of the bell; and the corporals, who are always present, superintend their duration and execution.

To maintain this direct regularity in the system of labor, it is a rule with Count Lodi never, on any pretext, to separate the workmen. The fields being all of equal size, the requisite number of laborers is sent to each, and the work must be completed in a given time. The laborers, like the ploughs, work in lines. I never beheld a more striking rural scene than that produced by twenty ploughs, at equal distances from each other, moving at an equal height, and on the same line, turning all together at the voice of the corporal, and resuming the same steady pace; a circumstance which had in it something of a silent solemnity. It was also a striking sight to behold a hundred and fifty mowers, ranged in an oblique line, regularly cutting down an abundant crop, and followed by an equal line of females, forming, behind, an exact parallel, opening the swathes that the moisture may evaporate.

It is thus, by a wonderful system of order, that

Count Lodi has invariably effected the execution of his plan, and transferred the care, the correctness, and the detail, in the culture of a small farm, to the immense space of two thousand six hundred acres. Over this whole extent not a single inch of ground is neglected. Every part receives an equal portion of manure and culture, and the whole repays the care bestowed upon it, by crops which one would scarcely expect from so moderate a soil, and in so large an occupation. But nothing is so powerful as the will of man, under the influence of resolution and perseverance.

LETTER IV.

PARMA, SEPTEMBER 10, 1812.

Sir,

The farther we advance towards the east, in the direction of the Po, the stratum of vegetable earth becomes deeper and more fertile; the rivers also, which, at the foot of the Alps, are deep and confined, are level with the surface as they approach the Adriatic: the soil is consequently moister, and better watered; the cultivation of corn, therefore, becomes less, and the grass lands are more extensive.

This change becomes apparent beyond the neighbourhood of Placenza. The subdivision of the farms, and the system of their management, are the same as in Piedmont; but the culture and produce vary considerably. Cattle, more than corn, form the riches of this part of Lombardy. To the eye of the traveller they excel in beauty and animation. All this right bank of the Po is planted with superb oaks, whose lofty branches impart to the country a freshness of verdure which one would

not have expected in Italy. These oaks produce a harvest of acorns, which the farmers consider as a valuable crop, as it serves to fatten an immense quantity of pigs. I was surprised to find that the shade of the oaks was scarcely in any degree injurious to the crops growing under them, which can be attributed only to the threefold influence arising from a fertile soil, the effectual manner in which it is watered, and an Italian sun.

It is well known that the dairies, in the vicinity of the Po, produce the Parmesan cheeses; the consumption of which is so great all over Italy. These meadows are the most fertile in the world; being constantly watered, they produce three, and sometimes four crops of hay in a season. But subdivided into an infinite number of parcels, and occupied by a great number of individuals, there are few who can singly support a dairy, because the making of cheese requires a quantity of milk, which is the produce of, at least, fifty cows. To effect this, the Lombards have, for some time, formed societies among their neighbours, to make their cheese in common. Twice a day, the milk of fifty or sixty cows belonging to the society, is sent to the principal house, where the dairy man takes an account of each person's proportion: he also keeps an account current with each, which is settled every six months, and discharged by a proportionate share of cheese.

This excellent method has been adopted in Switzerland, and has been described, in detail, in an ingenious work published at Geneva, by Mr. Charles Lullin,* and it is desirable that it should be extensively known, as there are few situations in which it might not be advantageously adopted.

The breed of horned cattle is also different in the neighbourhood of Placenza; we no longer see the large fawn-colored oxen, with short horns, as in Piedmont; but the fields are covered with beautiful cows, of a grey-slate color, with slender legs, cylindrical carcases, bright eyes, and long well turned horns. This breed is evidently produced by a continued cross between the Hungarian and that of the small Cantons in Switzerland.

This admirable Hungarian race is found, without mixture, in the south of Italy, and they produce the best oxen existing, but the cows are bad milkers; and the Lombards, for a long while, have found the necessity of crossing them, to remedy this fault, so as to obtain from their pastures all they are capable of producing. Thus, from a period, the date of which is not ascertained, two thousand cows pass annually over Mont St. Gothard, and are distributed through Lombardy, bringing a principle of

* This work, entitled Des Associations rurales connues on Swisse sous le Nom de Fruitières, may be had at Geneva and Paris of J. J. Paschoud.

amelioration which preserves, in the breeds of Italy, all the qualities which render them valuable.

These Swiss cows are not, themselves, of the Berne breed, known in France, and distinguished by their bright colors, and good shapes. Those of the smaller Cantons, judging by their dull color, their long horns, and their slender shapes, appeared to me to be derived from the Hungarian breed, improved by the climate, the food, and the care taken of them. These mix well, therefore, with the Italian breed, having both the same origin.

The farms are lett, as in Piedmont, on leases, at half the produce; but the cultivation is somewhat different. The pastures include a larger share; and maize, in a considerable portion of the land, gives way to hemp and winter beans. The course of husbandry is nearly as follows:

First year . . Maize and hemp—manured.
Second . . . . Wheat.
Third . . . . . Winter beans.
Fourth . . . . Wheat—manured.
Fifth . . . . . Clover, ploughed in after once mowing.
Sixth . . . . . Wheat.

In the neighbourhood of Parma they have begun to cultivate tobacco, and with considerable success; and it is sown the first year instead of maize and hemp.

This course is still more productive than that of

Piedmont; but the soil is richer, and, in consequence of the dairies, more highly manured; for it admits of being manured every third year, while in Piedmont it is only once in four years.

I shall enlarge no further on this admirable succession of culture, which gives four corn crops in six years, one of hemp, and one of food for cattle. This quick succession, it may be observed, is so well arranged, that the fertility of the soil is, at no time, deteriorated, while it admits the requisite preparatives, and the cleaning the land, by hoeing at regular intervals.

The winter beans seem the only crop meriting particular notice. Within a few years they have been successfully introduced into the neighbourhood of Geneva; that is to say, into a climate where the winters are more severe. The beans endure them without injury, and may be introduced into the northern countries, where they may become a valuable article in agriculture; being well adapted to fill up vacant spots in various crops.

The winter bean resembles the spring bean, in plant, flower, and seed. It is sown in the beginning of September, and it must acquire strength in the autumn to support the severity of the winter. The stem withers and dies under the snow, and during frost; but early in the spring several new stems shoot from the bottom, which flower in May, and the seeds ripen in July.

The culture is very simple; after a manured crop of wheat, the earth is turned in by a single ploughing, and moulders* by exposure to the weather. The beans are put into the ground early in September, either sown broad cast and harrowed, ploughed in, or drilled in lines, which admits of their being horse hoed in the spring, otherwise they must be hand hoed in April.

The crop being harvested in July, there is time to prepare the land for wheat, which follows it, and usually succeeds well.

This culture, adapted to open and clayey soils unfavorable to the growth of roots, accords well with the different periods of ploughing and sowing, and keeps up the fertility of the soil. It includes every desirable circumstance, and I have no doubt will extend rapidly.

Such is the slight sketch I have given you of the agriculture and crops of that part of Lombardy, which extends along the right bank of the Po; that is to say, of a part of the first region of agriculture, which I pointed out in my first letter.

This culture, it would seem, is principally directed to the production of food, and, except silk and hemp, there are no articles for manufacture. The result of this abundant production of food,

* In Norfolk, this word is pronounced *multers*, and seems expressively to denote the pulverization of the soil by exposure.—T.

is an immense population; no part of which is employed in manufacture, because they are not possessed of the necessary material.

The population is, therefore, divided into four classes only, that of public functionaries and military men; that of the land proprietors, who live on the rents of their estates; that of shopkeepers and artizans; and lastly, of those who having no property in land, are still supported by rural industry.

This last class resides wholly in the farm houses, dispersed over every part of Lombardy, while the three others live in the cities and towns; and this is the reason why, throughout the country, we see no villages, nor any number of peasant proprietors residing in particular neighbourhoods, so common in France. In return, the whole landed property belonging to capitalists, this class, who derive their income from their rent, is more numerous here than any where, and it has occasioned the extraordinary increase of cities, which present the agreeable aspect of ease and plenty.

This state of things, which has the semblance of increasing the public wealth, has, however, the grave inconvenience of keeping the whole class of rich proprietors in such a state of independence, as promotes, instead of their true interest, that indolence and moral paralysis which are so justly imputed to the Italians. At the same time it renders the whole class of farmers too indifferent to the

public interest, with which they are not connected by property: ever sure of a demand for the labor of their hands, which constitutes their only capital, they never trouble themselves about circumstances which can never affect them. Always destitute of the means of acquiring capital, they must remain stationary in their situation; the result is a torpor which nothing but the want of food can overcome.*

The class of shopkeepers and artificers, limited in their occupations by local consumption, have little future improvement to expect, and consequently have little to stimulate their activity. The state of society, in these countries, has, for a long while, however, afforded such a portion of good as to make it not worth the risk of changing it; and

* This is, surely, an unanswerable argument against the system of small farms, the great stimulus to exertion in every situation in society being, obviously, the hope of improving it, and of rising into a superior class. "When farming, I have said in another place,[a] was a mere system of maintenance, and formerly it was little more, and not pursued, like manufactures and commerce, as the means of acquiring wealth, small farms were adequate to the purpose; but where the object aimed at was limited, the exertion called forth for its attainment was inconsiderable; and this explains why small farms, in general, have been so unproductive."

I do not see how two opinions can more perfectly accord.—*T.*

[a] Holkham, its Agriculture, &c. Page 92, 3d edit.

a species of independence, also, which secures the future, as well as the present, and excites mutual respect.

For a short time a change was produced by the war: peace, however, restored the state of society, because it has its basis in the local arrangements of the soil, as well as in the distribution and occupation of the whole population.

LETTER V.

SARSANA, SEPTEMBER 20, 1812.

Sir,

In my preceding letters I gave a sketch of the agriculture of Lombardy, that is to say, of the first of the agricultural regions, into which I was induced to divide Italy. I have now just traversed the highest points of the Apennins, and shall attempt an account of my excursion, which will include the nature of the country, the habits of the inhabitants, and their agriculture.

Desirous of visiting the valleys of the Apennins, which are little known, and of observing the rural economy of the pastures, with which their summits are cloathed, I left Parma, accompanied by Messrs. Ortali and Succhi, who are owners of Merino flocks. My object was to pass over the high chain which separates the state of Modena from that of Genoa and Tuscany. This passage must be effected on horseback, and in many places only on foot, for the paths leading over these mountains are steeper and rougher than those of the Alps.

Parma is three leagues from the foot of the mountains, where we were to pass the first night of our journey, in the ancient castle of Sala. This chateau was the favorite residence of the last grand Duchess, sister of Marie Antoinette. It belongs now to a land agent, who has lett it, with the land, to my companions. The stables, the coach-houses, and the riding-house, are converted into sheep-houses, in which, during the winter, are two thousand Merinos; in the summer they are on the mountains, where we were going to see them. The extensive meadows, below the chateau, produce the hay on which they are fed.

Few situations in the world are more beautiful than that of Sala. Placed on the last terrace formed on the declivity of the mountain, it commands the whole plain of Lombardy, while behind it is an immense forest of chesnuts. The chateau, however, is but a moderate building, whose principal charm is the majesty of nature which surrounds it.

We quitted Sala at break of day, and for two hours skirted the foot of the mountains in the direction of the Po. We traversed paths sometimes level with the plain, and sometimes ascending among vines and chestnut trees, where we enjoyed enchanting prospects. The hills which terminate the Apennins are furrowed with small streams, and covered with dwellings. The vine is principally cultivated; and wherever the soil is not good

enough for it, there the chestnut tree spreads its vast umbrageous branches. We arrived at length at the village of Berzola.

It was here that I quitted the fertile plains of Lombardy; turning suddenly to the south, we enter a valley, which is annually ravaged by the river Parma, and reascending as far as its source, we began to penetrate the wild part of the mountains.

We continued about seven leagues in this valley, the road lying in the bed of the river, which at this time exhibited an appearance of aridity and devastation, extending from one mountain to the other, the breadth of half a league. This vast space is often covered with water, but the inundation never continues longer than a few days.

On each side arose two chains of equal heights, which appear, at first, only as pleasant hills; ascending afterwards as we advanced, we found they were connected with the high chain of the Apennins, to which they seemed as the arms, stretching from the south to the north; while the central chain extended from the west to the east.

These ramifications continue through the whole length of the Apennins, and are, evidently, the barriers which have resisted the violent action of floods.

During the first hour of our route, the declivities of the hills were enlivened by the view of many

habitations, interspersed with cultivated spots and vineyards. At certain distances church steeples were visible through the chestnut trees; but these marks of human residence became less frequent as we advanced in the valley. We soon saw neither vines nor elm trees; the declivities, too steep to admit of cultivation, presented to the eye only a few pastures, some trees, and an appearance of devastation. The houses were few, here and there scattered about, small and dark, and being covered with slate, and their roofs pointed, indicated our being already in the region of snow.

We, moreover, no longer saw the beautiful cows of the plain; some ordinary cattle, spotted sheep and goats, feed on the meagre sward.

These marks of existence left us in the last hour of our journey; the valley became suddenly narrowed; the river no longer ran over a wide bed, and was contracted between enormous rocks. The mountains assumed a more sublime character, and were marked by rude forests and large masses of rocks. In short, all the surrounding scenery wore the genuine physiognomy of the Alps.

Our path became, suddenly, very steep, and we clambered up a great mass of rocks, which, at once, presented to our view a deep gulph, at the bottom of which the water roared, a bridge formidably thrown over the abyss, and beyond it, on a hill covered with wood, the steeple of the

village of Bosco, where our journey was to terminate.

I am unable to describe the impression made upon me by the view of this village, which is the capital of the mountain district. It resembled none I had any where seen, but it gave me rather an idea of a village in Otaheite, than of an European hamlet. The houses were not built in lines, nor were there any streets or gardens, nor any appearance of cultivation. On a fine mossy down, some enormous chestnuts raised their heads, at a considerable distance from each other, and their united branches formed a verdant dome over the houses, which were scattered here and there, in the midst of this natural orchard. A church is built in an opening of the wood; the front of which is handsome, and near it is the clergyman's residence.

We arrived just as the sound of the angelus brought the inhabitants to the church; they were on their knees before the porch, and although the sight of our caravan drew off their attention, the scene, at once, rustic and religious, excited in us a peculiar interest.

Strangers are received in these mountains with much hospitality; the priests are much distinguished by the zeal and ardor with which they exercise it. The good curate of Bosco, his angelus being finished, almost lifted us from our tired beasts, to conduct us to his house; he knew my fellow

travellers; but had they been equally strangers with myself, he would have received us with the same cordiality.

Our visit being unexpected, he scarcely knew where to run to provide for us; he would have killed all his pigeons; he scolded his housekeeper, broke the bottles, the glasses, and the eggs. At last, however, he gave us plenty of omlets and six pair of pigeons for supper, which we ate with the same pleasure they were given to us.

After supper we were visited by the principal inhabitants of the place, who contested for the honor of serving us as guides to conduct us the following day. I took this opportunity of obtaining some information respecting the culture and customs of the country, which I shall now communicate to you; it will exhibit the practice of the whole chain of the Apennins.

The soil is too much broken by the ravages of water, to allow sufficient space for the growth of corn; the climate is also too cold for the vine, for maize, or leguminous plants; they can, therefore, only take advantage of the few spots where the grass grows to make hay, which, with the beech leaves, is the winter food of the cattle. They consist of some small horses used for carrying, of goats, and speckled sheep. They bring up a great many pigs, of an excellent breed, which they fatten with chesthuts and skimmed milk. In the summer

these animals run over the neighbouring mountains, but they are housed in winter. From the milk of the goats and the ewes, they make small, hard, sour cheeses, which form a great part of the food of the inhabitants. The wool of the sheep is spun by the women in the winter, who manufacture it into a kind of stuff, of which, thread forms the warp, and with which the families are cloathed.

Thus this country supports its inhabitants without agriculture, by its spontaneous productions, that is, by chestnuts which grow in the greatest vigor and abundance on the sides of the mountains. The fruit is larger, and of a quality much superior to that which grows in the north. They are eaten under a variety of forms, but chiefly in that of a flat cake, which they call bread; and I confess its form appears to me the only objection to it. The wheat bread comes from Parma, and forms an article of luxury, in which they indulge only on particular occasions.

Potatoes would be very valuable here; there is plenty of land adapted to their growth; they would form an addition to their food, and the crop being certain, would add considerably to the produce of the country. I have found them cultivated in many distant places, but here they are unacquainted with them. The priest had heard them spoken of; I endeavored to persuade him to attempt their

cultivation; I wish he may have followed my advice, as a return for his civility to me.

The means of maintaining this Apennin population, depend entirely on the spontaneous production of nature; and consist of chestnuts, the crop of which is precarious, and of animal product, which is very inconsiderable. They have also a good many pigeons, which live I can scarcely tell how, and plenty of bees. The population is still tolerably numerous, and the land much divided. The inhabitants are very industrious, and extremely economical. They make their furniture and cloaths, and scarcely know any other want. They make a great deal of charcoal, which is the only process by which they turn the forests to account; but the principal revenue is derived from migration: the whole active population quitting their homes at the favorable season, and going to work in Lombardy, and more especially in Tuscany, whence they return with the money they have saved, which forms almost all the capital which circulates among them.

The inhabitants of the Apennins are, as you see, the Auvergnats of Italy. At this time they are working on the new roads of Genoa and Spezzia, where they obtain great wages; they also greatly respect the French engineers, which shews how extensive is the influence of the polytechnic school.

It is also evident that a country which, with difficulty, supports its population, and which has no crops to supply saleable articles of provisions, nor, consequently, any net profit, is not likely to get into the hands of capitalists; the peasant, therefore, in the whole range of the Apennins, is the owner of the soil on which he treads. It is the only part of Italy where this takes place, and it is a characteristic trait of these countries.

The sun had risen when we quitted our good curate, to ascend the high chain of the Apennins: our caravan was well supplied; the whole village having brought us provisions with an hospitality that much interested us; the principal inhabitants offered to accompany us, and we had fifteen horses when we left the parsonage.

We were soon inclosed in a thick forest of chestnuts, which covered the first part of the mountain. Sometimes the road passed over smooth grass, and very often over rocks covered with moss, which were interlaced by huge roots of gigantic trees. There was a perpetual coolness under this shade, which the sun had never penetrated. We were two hours in passing through this wood, destined originally to become the most striking feature in these Cantons, and to form the manna of this wilderness.

We came on foot to a barrier of rocks, and having passed them with some difficulty, we entered

the region of beeches. The ascent became rougher, and the horses could scarcely climb up. At length, in about two hours, our guides called out that they saw the *Aqua santa;* and after having reached the last summit, we found ourselves within view of a small lake. The water was clear and bright; its shape oval and regular, like the crater of a volcano, and raised about two or three hundred feet high. The declivity here was covered with beeches, whose verdure was reflected in the limpid water of the lake; and had it not been for this rich vegetation, I should have thought myself on the borders of some of the lakes in the high Alps.

The people of this country attribute great virtues to these waters, which have no apparent outlet; and Aqua santa is visited as a sort of pilgrimage. I could not ascertain at what height we were, but it must have been considerable, as masses of snow had not melted since the winter, and were seen all around us.

Beyond the lake commence the great summer pastures, which, in the Apennins, are called *Macchie;* they extend over all the brows of the high chain, beginning at the valley of la Magra, which separates the lower mountains of Genoa from those of Tuscany and Modena. These pastures are divided by points of rocks, sunk at their bases in long lines. Some sheds, tolerably well built, shelter the shepherds, but the flocks remain constantly abroad.

Almost all these mountains belong to the Communes of the lower valleys; they lett them, for the season, at so much per head of the cattle,—a piastre for a horse, five sous for a sheep, and three only for a goat; the latter, in reality, browse only on the rocks, and among the thickets, the best pastures being reserved for the horses.

These flocks come all from Tuscany, where they pass the winter, in the pastures of the maremmes. They are the property of vagrant shepherds, who, like those of Spain, possess no other capital, have no domicile, nor fixed residence. These shepherds limit themselves to different kinds of animals; some have breeds of horses; others have sheep, and others goats. They hire the pastures in Tuscany, for the winter, at three piastres for a horse, twelve sous for a sheep, and eight sous a head for a goat.

These wandering herds, which would be very detrimental in a good agricultural country, become valuable in places, the nature of which excludes man, and does not admit cultivation. This Apennin migration produces, thus, the double advantage of consuming the herbage of the high mountains, and of peopling the maremmes with the only inhabitants that can profit by their spontaneous vegetation, because they remain there only in the winter time. It is, indeed, the only way in which the vegetable productions of these countries can be

converted into wool and cheese. The migration of the flocks is, therefore, here a judicious system, and well adapted.

The first flocks I met were composed of the common breed of Tuscany; they were not tall, but their forms were excellent; they were white, and well covered with wool, and appeared very like the wandering flocks of Provence. Their fleeces are somewhat finer; they weigh a kilogramme,* washed on the back, and they now sell in Dauphiny; formerly they were exported, at Leghorn, for England; but the profit on the cheese, from the ewes, is greater than that of wool.

Near this place were a great many horses; we had some difficulty in approaching them; they consisted of two or three years old colts; the mares remaining in the plains. As is the case with all wild animals, these horses have a great similarity in form. They are well looking; their limbs slender, and well shaped: but they have the haunches of a mule, and the long narrow head of the Italian horses.

These little horses, however, though badly fed, and worse looked after, will go long journeys without their wind failing, or their courage diminishing; but they are better adapted to the saddle than for draft, being deficient in the shoulder, and in

* Kilogramme—two pounds, three ounces, five drachms, English weight.

strength of collar. But as oxen, in Italy, draw all the heavy loads, this small, weak breed is well enough suited to the purposes to which it is applied.

As I approached this country of rocks and pines, I observed, what before I had no idea of, a vagrant herd of more than twelve hundred goats, living constantly in the woods, without sheds, or any covering. These animals, which are quite wild, come near the shepherds only twice a day, to take a little salt, which is given to them at the time of milking. This was the only opportunity I had of seeing the goats. They were very beautiful, and I particularly remarked one which might have been exhibited as a wild goat, at the garden of plants, at Paris.

At some distance, and on an excellent pasture, was a flock of Merinos, belonging to the companions of my journey. There were nearly two thousand of them. Excepting that of Rambouillet, I never saw a flock in better condition, or composed of more beautiful individuals. They are, indeed, not managed as the flocks in Tuscany. Instead of passing the winter in the maremmes, they go, in autumn, to the sheepfolds of Sala, where excellent forage is provided for them. They thus undergo only a partial migration, and avoid the severity of the winter. This arrangement appears necessary for the Merinos; for the proprie-

tors, in 1811, tempted by the low price of wintering them in the maremmes, sent a thousand thither, seven hundred of which perished by cold and want of food; and many other facts induce me to think that no breed of sheep requires so much care and expence, in their support, as the Merinos.

I passed the rest of the day in visiting the sheds, examining the flocks, and the whole economy of this vagrant system, which, as I before observed, compleats the system of Tuscany. We passed the night in one of the huts; and in the morning, at break of day, I took leave of my companions, and set off, with my guide, to descend towards the Mediterranean.

I had not yet passed beyond the northern side of the chain of the Apennins, and its summit was still half a league before me. This summit divides the country of Parma from that of Tuscany. To reach it I ascended a green turf, which had been refreshed by the dew, and I soon was higher than the whole chain of the Apennins; and when I gained the highest point, a boundless horizon opened before me; never had so noble a prospect struck my view; all Italy was extended at my feet. At a distance, and in a clear sky, as far as the eye could reach, the long chain of the Alps marked the frontiers of France, as far as the borders of Illyrium. They inclosed, as in a silver frame, that immense plain, watered by so many rivers. To-

wards the south, the land seemed gradually to descend into the morning's misty horizon, from the height where I was, as far as the borders of the sea. I could distinguish the gulph and the chateaux of Spezzia; and I surveyed the magnificent line, along which the sea takes a curve, as if to shew respect to the shores of Tuscany, and passes on to embellish those of Naples.

Thus situated I could not but advert to the history of this ancient country, from the descent of Æneas, on the banks of the Tiber, to the days of Marengo and Lodi; what various events might have been retraced in my memory, and what impressions might I not have received from this theatre, in which, as in a panorama, all Italy was pictured before me!

The spot I have just described is, unquestionably, the most striking of any in Europe; and I would advise travellers to take this route. They may easily accomplish it, by going from Parma to Pontremoli, by the new carriage road, whence, in three hours, on horseback, the height alluded to may be attained, and they may return to Pontremoli the same day. But this journey, probably more interesting than that of the Glaciers of Savoy, can be undertaken only in the summer, and most strangers prefer passing the winter in Italy. They do not form a correct idea of it; they see only churches, ancient ruins, tombs, &c. whilst all the

riches which nature displays, in this country, are lost to them.

The frontiers of Tuscany were before me; I could distinguish them as I descended on a good road, six feet wide, and well constructed on the declivity of the mountain. It led me from mountain to mountain, until I came to the valley of Magra, in which Pontremoli is situated.

This road, as well as many other works, was executed by Leopold; he paid great attention to the facilitating the passage of the flocks to their pastures; and this road has no other object: it ought to serve as an example to the inhabitants of the Alps.

In descending towards the Mediterranean, nature shewed herself under a very different aspect. I had lost the view of fertile plains, fields of corn, of meadows, with their canals, of oaks and willows. I was in a southern climate, and I passed through woods of ilexes and olive trees; of laurels and cypresses: instead of banks covered with trefoil, I saw tuberoses and hyacinths; I was in the mountains of Genoa.

Beyond Magra, which separates the lower chains from the higher Apennins, which I had just traversed, I entered the country of Genoa, with its luxuriousness, its misery, and its state of neglect.

I passed sterile heights, and some slopes, where I observed some stunted chestnuts; valleys half

destroyed by floods, villages which indicated misery, and a physiognomy in their inhabitants, which seemed expressive of crime. I went through Compiano, a town which furnishes all Europe with exhibitors of monkeys and wild beasts, and arrived, at last, on the route of la Corniche, at the post of Bracco.

I have little to say on the culture of these mountains; they have no pastures, and consequently there is no pastoral industry. There are only goats and a few sheep in the country. The chestnut trees, though wretched ones, furnish the principal food of the inhabitants. The valleys produce the olive tree, the vine, and maize, and afford some resources to the inhabitants; but their more certain reliance is on migration and going to sea.

I remarked in no other place so many small crops of well-managed potatoes; and near the post-house at Bracco, there was some land very judiciously cleared, and bearing a good crop. Thinking it belonged to the post-master, I congratulated him upon it, but he informed me it belonged to the French gens d'armes of the station; he said it had been necessary, within five years, to increase their number, and they had introduced the cultivation of potatoes; the country people had followed their example, and in the late year of scarcity it had been much extended.

I could not but admire the singular manner in

which Providence had chosen to bestow on this country, the only production which appears adapted to its wretched soil. Assuredly no agricultural society would have suggested it.

I thus traversed the whole chain of the Apennins, and found myself on the shores of the Riviere of Genoa: I followed its windings until it falls into the gulf, where this celebrated city seems to have placed its throne, to reign over the adjoining seas.

I shall not speak of the splendor of Genoa, nor of its palaces, nor of the trophies of its ancient glory, for accounts of these have been often given; but I will limit myself to a description of the singular appearance of the sterile, and yet magnificent, country with which it is surrounded; and I cannot do this better than by continuing my journal.

It was six in the evening when I left Genoa for Tuscany, taking the road along the sea shore, which is called la Corniche. At present it is only a path along the shore, or near the declivity of the mountain; but in a few years it will form a magnificent terrace, passing round the gulf, and thus uniting France with Italy. Some parts of the road are already compleated; but they were not sufficiently connected to permit my taking advantage of it, and I accompanied the courier, who, as yet, made this passage on horseback.

It was a holiday, and the people of Genoa were rambling in the environs to inhale, during this

beautiful evening, the cool, refreshing sea air, and to enjoy the perfume of the orange trees. The sun was beginning to set beyond the mountains, and the country houses, built on their sides, began to be veiled in a half obscure tint, so that I could scarcely distinguish the fresco painting on their fronts. Elegantly dressed females hastened into the bowers, on the road side, their curiosity having been excited by the galloping of our horses. They were not, as formerly, covered with veils which concealed their persons and shapes; they had left off the shawl called Mezaro, adopted, it is said, through coquetry; they were dressed as in France, and as women dress every where. In about an hour we were obliged to slacken our pace, for we had reached the extremity of the new road; and as night came on we quitted these environs, decorated with so much art. The road became a rocky path, whose turnings sometimes brought us into groves of olive trees, and sometimes to the borders of the sea.

It soon became quite dark; the inhabitants had quitted the fields and retired to their dwellings. Perfumes, the names of which I was unacquainted with, exhaled from every plant which grew on the road side; nightingales, concealed in the shade of the trees, and in the obscurity of the night, sang as we passed along; thousands of shining insects, flying from flower to flower, illuminated, with a

fugitive brightness, their calices and stamina, and seemed like a shower of stars dropped on the earth to charm the night. Trusting to the acquired habit of the horse I rode, I tied the bridle round his neck, and, without any apprehension, left him to guide me. I breathed the air, freshened by the evening breese, but still soft and warm. I heard the murmur of the waves which died on the shore. The air was so pure and calm, that the distant waves were not, this night, louder than those of a rivulet. I was reflecting on the journey I had just commenced, and pictured to myself agreeable images of the charming countries I was on the point of visiting. A recollection of twenty years brought back the period of my youth, when I had before travelled through them; I had then taken the same road; I was with a friend of my early days; he is no more; like many others, he has found a grave in a distant land; while I was thinking of him, as I silently passed in the night, I heard the sound of cannon at a considerable distance. It came from the sea, and no doubt was an English ship of war, which had fired upon some coasting vessel to bring it to, for I counted but six shots; after which, the sea and the shore became again perfectly still.

It would have been gratifying to me to have remained, uninterruptedly, to have received all the impressions of this night, some of which would

have been tranquil, whilst others would have severely agitated me. All nature spake a language in unison with the clearness of the atmosphere, and the stillness of the sea. The climate and the plants, uniting their softness and their perfume, created an imaginary world around me, which my fancy would have had a pleasure in embellishing. I could have wished to have protracted its existence, but it must have ceased at the day's first dawn, which I should have lamented, as terminating one of those dreams which charm by their illusions.

Illuminated by the rising sun, the horizon displayed itself in all its splendor; I was then near Sestri, on one of the terraces recently cut out of the rock, to form a passage in the projected road. I commanded a compleat view of the sea. Less calm than in the night, a breeze from Africa put the waves in motion, which broke at the foot of these rocks; they were wetted by the sea spray, and the shrubs which grew on their declivities were watered by this mist. The freshness of the morning was spread, in silver drops of dew, on the sides of the mountains; in some of their recesses, I observed dwellings, surrounded with vines and fig trees; these houses were painted in fresco, and imitated, in their deceptive fronts, the elegance of a superior architecture. Round their flat roofs were balustrades, covered with jasmin and clematis.

The surrounding ground exhibited an arid nakedness; and where covered, its cloathing was of no value. The mountains of Genoa seem, indeed, to have been created, to show that nature can sometimes amuse herself, by putting on a splendid, but useless dress; for here every thing, which serves to support life, is rigidly excluded; while, whatever is ornamental, vegetates with profusion. Neither fruits nor harvests are found here; but in these rocks every plant is a beautiful flower, and every shrub is a laurel.

I passed the whole day in these paths amidst the splendor of this sterile country. I could scarcely get any thing to eat at the wretched houses where we changed horses, and the animals found inadequate support in the mountains where they were pastured; they were small and meagre, yet I could not but admire the courage with which they climbed the sides of the mountains. They were taken from the maremmes, in Tuscany, and their having been brought up in a free and wild state, has given them a resolute character and surprising ardor. At length having reached an elevated ridge, I could see the vast basin of Spezzia, surrounded by hills which are covered with olive trees. The road became wider as we descended into the valley, and from thence to Sarzanna, I again found the new road, but being scarcely finished, no track of a carriage had yet been made

upon it, indeed none were, at this time, kept in the neighbourhood, and I continued my journey to Sarzanna on horseback, where I arrived and from whence I address this letter.

To-morrow I shall set off for Tuscany, and have to describe a country, a mode of industry and scenes very different.

LETTER VI.

FLORENCE, MAY 4, 1813.

Sir,

I WISH to present you with a picture of the delightful country which bears the name of Tuscany; for after M. Sismondi I cannot attempt to give the details of its agriculture. This will be best done by describing it as I pass through it, and this I will now attempt.

Tuscany comprehends three entirely distinct regions; the Arno, at the bottom of its smiling valley, forms, among the mountains, a basin, the centre of which is occupied by Florence, and extends southward as far as Cortona, and westward to Pisa. Near the sea this basin, though sometimes much contracted, expands into a vast plain, smooth as glass, and from which the waters have receded.

The right bank of the Arno is bordered by the high chain of the Apennins; the left extends as far as the sea, and the frontiers of the states of the church; the surface is here uneven and rough; the soil has little fertility; the air is unwholesome

and its summits are covered with the ruins of different ages.

The Apennin region includes two-sixths of the whole extent of Tuscany; the rich vale of Arno one-sixth only; the other three-sixths form the region known under the name of maremme or country of foul air; Sienna may be considered as its capital.

Thus the fertile and pleasant part of Tuscany is limited to a sixth part of its extent, to a description of which travellers have usually confined themselves; I shall attempt it also; but I wish to give you some information concerning that wild and unhealthy country of which so little is known, which nature seems prematurely to have stricken with death and sterility, but which every where exhibits the vestiges of a happier period, and of a prosperity now no more. Tuscany has been twice the theatre of the highest civilization, and perhaps no where can be better seen the influence of man over the powers of the creation.

In the preceding letter I have described the appearance and character of the Apennins, of those mountains which present to the eye only valleys ruined by the fall of waters, masses of wreck, wooded declivities and wild tracts. The same features are found in the Apennins of Tuscany, and it would be superfluous again to describe them. Nature is, however, somewhat gentler in the

Florentine region, as if the vicinity of this earthly paradise spread a softer influence around it. The tops of the mountains do not rise quite so high, their sides are less steep, their pastures are fresher, and their valleys more thickly inhabited.

But, as in the rest of the Apennins, the population is poor, living on chestnuts and maintained on the profits of migration, and work which they procure at Florence, at Leghorn, in the fertile valley of Arno, and in the mines of the isle of Elba.

The course of the Arno above Florence traverses the vale of Chiana. This valley, in every respect, resembles the vale of Arno, which extends from Florence to the sea. A description of the excursion I have just made in the latter will suffice for the whole valley which this river waters.

I was alone when I left Florence. I passed through Pistoia and Lucca as far as Pisa, along the right bank of the Arno, at the foot of the Apennins. Forests of olive trees covered the lower parts of the mountains, and by their foliage concealed an infinite number of small farms, which peopled these parts of the mountains; chestnut trees raised their heads on the higher slopes, their healthy verdure contrasting with the pale tint of the olive trees, and spreading a brightness over this amphitheatre.

The road was bordered on each side with village houses, not more than a hundred paces from each

other; they are built of brick, and in a justness of proportion, and with an elegance of form unknown in our country. They consist of only one story, which has often but a single door and two windows in the front. They are placed at a little distance from the road, and separated from it by a wall, and a terrace of some feet in extent. On the wall are commonly placed many vases of antique forms, in which flowers, aloes, and young orange trees are growing. The house itself is compleatly covered with vines, so that during the summer it is difficult to determine whether they are green pavilions, or houses for the winter.

Before these houses we saw groups of peasant females dressed in white linen, silk corsets, and straw hats ornamented with flowers, and placed on one side of the head. They are constantly employed in braiding fine straw plats, the treasure of this valley, and with which the straw hats of Florence are manufactured.

This manufacture is become a source of prosperity to the vale of Arno, it brings an annual return of three millions,* which are divided among the females of this country, for the men have no concern in this branch of industry. Every young woman, for a few pence, purchases the straw she has occasion for, she exerts her talent to braid it as fine as possible, and sells, for her own profit, the

* Of francs.

hats she has made; the money which she thus earns, at length, forming her dower.

The father of a family, however, claims of the females of his house some of the labor on his farm; this is done by the women from the mountains, who are paid by the young women in the plain, out of the profit on the hats, for doing the work for them. They earn from thirty to forty sous a day in plaiting straw, while they can hire a poor woman from the Apennins for eight or ten.—By which means they also preserve their hands from being hardened by rustic labor, which would lessen the flexibility of their fingers, so necessary in a work of such fine texture.

Such are the female peasants of the vale of Arno, whose beauty and graces have been so much celebrated by travellers, whose language Alfieri went to study, and who seem born to embellish the arts and serve them as models. They are the shepherdesses of Arcadia, but it is because they are not peasants, resembling them only in their health and freedom from care, and knowing nothing of their pains, their scorching weather, and their fatigues.

I have been assured, that a crop of two acres will supply straw sufficient for the whole manufacture of hats in Tuscany. It is the straw of beardless wheat, cut before it is quite ripe, and which the sterility of the soil renders white. The

soil is chosen in the calcareous hills; it is never manured, and the seed is sown very thick.

These houses being so near each other, it is evident that the land annexed to them must be small, and that property, in these valleys, must be very much divided; the extent of these domains being from three to ten acres. The land lies round the houses, and is divided into fields by small canals, or rows of trees, some of which are mulberry trees, but the greatest number poplars, the leaves of which are eaten by the cattle. Each tree supports a vine, the branches of which are twined round, in various directions.

These divisions, arranged in oblong squares, are large enough to be cultivated by a plough without wheels, and a pair of oxen. There is a pair of them between ten or twelve of the farmers: they employ them successively in the cultivation of all the farms. The oxen come from the neighbourhood of Rome and the maremmes. They are of the Hungarian breed, extremely well kept, and covered with embroidered white linen and red ornaments.

Almost every farm maintains a well-looking horse, which goes in a small two-wheeled cart, neatly made, and painted red; they serve for all the purposes of draught for the farm, and also to convey the farmer's daughters to mass and to balls. Thus, on holidays, hundreds of these little

carts are seen flying in all directions, carrying the young women, decorated with flowers and ribbons.

The farms in the vale of Arno have not sufficient forage for cows, the farmers, therefore, have no other stock but heifers, which they buy at three months old, keep them till they are eighteen months old, when they send them to the butcher, and replace them by younger ones, which are brought from the maremme pastures, to the fairs in the vale of Arno.

You will understand the reason for this practice, when I shall have explained the husbandry of this valley. There is no natural meadow land; the leaves of trees, the refuse of vegetables, and a little wild clover, are all which the cattle feed upon. Every thing here is reserved for the use of man; who, in consequence of early civilization, has increased prodigiously.

The husbandry is not here uniformly the same, it is, however, generally as follows, which will give some idea of the quick succession of crops.

First year....Maize, French beans, pease, or other vegetables—manured.
Second year..Wheat.
Third year...Winter beans.
Fourth year..Wheat.
Fifth year....Natural clover, sown after wheat in the spring, and followed by sorgho.

That is to say, six crops in five years, one only of which is for cattle.

Sorgho is a large variety of parsnip; it produces a coarse flour, makes wretched soup, and bad polenta.*

These different crops, though manured but once in five years, attain considerable perfection; which must be attributed to the alluvial soil being deep and rich; to its being cultivated with the utmost care; to the crops being judiciously arranged, and to the houses in the vicinity furnishing that manure, the chemical action of which we cannot but admit, though it escapes our senses.

Thus this immense population is supported on the produce of the land thus distributed, but with extreme economy, and it is never able to lay by any thing, as a reserve against unfavorable years. Under these circumstances, the inhabitants are supplied from the port of Leghorn and the markets of Romagno, and they make their purchases with wine, oil, and straw hats. It is neither the natural fertility of the soil, nor the abundance that strikes the eye of the traveller, which constitute the well-being of its inhabitants. It is the number of individuals among whom the total produce is di-

* Polenta is a sort of hasty pudding, made with maize flour, and when mixed with butter, &c. is an esteemed dish in Italy.—*T.*

vided, which fixes the portion that each is enabled to enjoy. Here it is very small.

I have thus far, indeed, exhibited a delightful country, well watered, fertile, and covered with a perpetual vegetation; I have shewn it divided into countless inclosures, which, like so many beds in a garden, display a thousand varying productions; I have shewn, that to all these inclosures are attached well-built houses, cloathed with vines, and decorated with flowers; but, on entering them, we find a total want of all the conveniences of life, a table more than frugal, and a general appearance of privation. The occupiers are not the proprietors of them, they only farm them, paying, in kind, half of the produce to the landlords.

These proprietors reside in the numerous cities of the fertile valleys of Tuscany; many are owners of a hundred of these farms, and some have ten, twenty, or thirty. The population is thus divided into two classes, which never associate, the city proprietors and the country non-proprietors. To these must be added the merchants and artisans, who also reside in the cities, and this will account for the number of the cities and their population.

One is astonished in reflecting on the amount of capital, which must have been expended in the vale of Arno, to have effected the present division of property, to have built the immense number of

farm-houses, and to have brought the material of the country into a state of productiveness. This astonishment is increased when we take into consideration the extensive system which must have been established, to protect the valleys from the ravages of the waters.

Placed between two chains of mountains, one of which is very elevated, the vale of Arno was periodically devastated by numerous torrents, which were precipitated from the mountains, charged with stones and whatever else was thrown down. It became necessary to control these waters, to prevent their ravages, and at the same time, by irrigation, to profit of them.

To effect this, means were contrived to confine the course of these torrents within strong walls; thus making a great number of canals. They were formed in strait lines, to prevent any angles or projections being thrown down by the force of the streams, and to allow the stones brought down with them, to be deposited in the beds the water passed over. At regular distances, openings were made at the mean level of the stream, that the water might run out laterally, pass on to the land, and remain on it long enough to deposit the mud brought with it. A great many canals, by successive outlets of the water, divided the principal current, and checking its rapidity, allowed the surrounding land to profit by irrigation. These canals

are infinitely subdivided, and to such a degree, that there is not a single square of land which is not surrounded by them. They are all lined with walls, built with square bricks.

Each stream has for itself a compleat and separate system of defence and subdivision, so that the whole valley is, as it were, covered with a network of small streams, which convey their waters, and their freshness all around. The system requires a number of bridges to connect this crowd of small islands, and maintain their respective communications. The capital expended, in forming the whole of this system, must have been immense.

But how much greater a capital must have been employed in building the great number of cities and towns which are spread along the course of the Arno! These cities and towns have an appearance of splendor, which, in other places, belongs only to cities of the first rank. Their temples, their fountains, their promenades, all their edifices, to a stile of the most perfect elegance, unite an imposing and majestic grandeur. The whole capital of all Tuscany would not, at the present period, build the churches, which stand upon its soil, with their decorations, their marbles, and their porphyries.

I was more particularly struck with this luxury of architecture, and this profusion of monuments, when I arrived at Pistoia. One might have sup-

posed it a city built as a model, and that the inhabitants had found themselves there accidentally; for there are now no more than eight thousand, whereas, formerly, there were forty thousand. The population of all these cities has diminished nearly in the same proportion, and yet the amount is still prodigious. At their most prosperous period, they must have exceeded all known proportions. The vast buildings without inhabitants give to these cities, at this time, an appearance of solitude, which, in the midst of their palaces, recalls their past splendor.

Beyond Pistoia the country becomes still more pleasant and fertile, because there is a deeper alluvial deposit on the soil; and because the valleys, as they enlarge, are further removed from the mountains, and enjoy a softer climate. The verdure also becomes thicker, the crops more abundant, and the horizon less obstructed.

Near Pescia, the road again approaches the Apennins; this pretty city rests on a slope of a valley covered with olive trees. In the middle of these trees, and upon the declivity of the hill, is a pleasant rustic dwelling, which can be approached only by a foot path; the access to it being prevented by large fig trees, vines, and aloes. In this retreat I went to visit your friend and mine, M. Sismondi. He was occupied in writing the last volumes of the History of Italy. From his shel-

tered residence he had before him a most extensive prospect, the theatre of so many scenes: at a distance, rising towards the hills of Volterra, he could see the ruins of those cities and castles, the history of which he has given, and which seem to present themselves as ancient witnesses of the traditions of time.

A hill, detached from the Apennins, rises alone near the mouths of the Arno, and separates its valley, from the plain of Lucca. The basin of Lucca is still more fertile than the vale of Arno. The culture is the same, but the produce is much more abundant. Nature here does much, but the industry of man, in no degree, equals it. We recognize neither the same elegance in the country houses, nor the same attention to the construction of the canals. Every thing is more rustic, more neglected, less finished. The women are badly dressed, their language has lost its grace, as their persons their charms.

The ancient city of Lucca is in the centre of this plain, and near the course of the Serchio. It seems extraordinary that this city should not have a single Italian feature. Its crooked streets, its pointed roofs, the irregularity of its buildings, give it a resemblance to a Flemish city. I wished to have had this singularity explained, but I could not obtain even a conjecture on the subject.

In going from Lucca to Pisa, we take a new

road; it passes, with the Serchio, through an opening in the hill which separates the two cities, and we debouche with it into the vast plain of Pisa and Leghorn.

In approaching Pisa and the sea, we no longer see that garden culture which enlivens the environs of Florence. There are fewer trees, the houses are more widely scattered, and the ploughs work on a greater scale, in more extensive fields; the families of the metayers are not so numerous; and the lands are cultivated by a few great farmers. We get near the country of foul air, and on the borders of the pastoral culture.

I have just described to you the charming valley of Arno, the most delicious country, probably, in the world. No where is property so much divided; no where has man so much improved on nature. From every stream he has formed a thousand canals; from every grassy bank, and from every natural meadow, the cultivator has been able to obtain some of nature's generous gifts. There is not a single clump of trees, nor scarcely a single tree, which is the spontaneous production of nature. They have all been planted and pruned by man; his presence is every where conspicuous, and he multiplies his operations indefinitely. At a distance, only, is seen that chain of mountains which he has, as it were, abandoned to nature, and over which he has not extended his empire.

This artificial culture, by covering the whole country with regular plantations, and intermixing them with the vine, has excluded the native vegetation, the picturesque forms, and shaded tints, which give to nature such variety and such harmony. The tints here are uniform, though lively; the forms all resemble each other; the landscape appears, always, as if viewed in a camera obscura, and the scenery such as Poussin would not have taken his subjects from. Civilization has no where advanced so far, and no where has man more successfully appropriated to his use the native powers of the creation.

But this improvement of nature, by the exertions of man, is not progressive, and it does not go on in our days: it was compleated at a period much anterior, and which it is difficult to ascertain. It does not belong to the ancient Roman civilization; the vast system of architecture is more modern and christian. The Grecian stile which we here recognize, places it subsequent to the epoque of the restoration of letters in Italy; nor can it belong to the peaceable reign of the Medici, for almost all these monuments bear a prior date. The period when human industry attained its acme, must then have been during the stormy times in which the Tuscan republics flourished, a frightful period in history, magnificent, however, in the results, which ages have secured to us.

To what a height must the population, the commerce, and the wealth of these cities, have been carried, in the space of a few leagues, to have formed more cities, to have built more churches, and have raised more palaces, than, at this period, are existing in many extensive states!

This system of building is compleat, even in that country where the activity of the port of Leghorn has only, within eighty years, been able to cultivate the land in its neighbourhood.

I merely mention this problem in history, but I shall not attempt to solve it. In my next I shall describe a country where nothing remains but the ruins of an ancient civilization, while in the vale of Arno it is still preserved, but it is in the manner of cabinets of natural history; the forms and the colors are the same, but there is no longer any activity; every thing there is stationary.

LETTER VII.

PISA, MAY 15, 1813.

Sir,

Before we proceed to the maremmes of Tuscany, I ought to give you an account of one of the most extraordinary agricultural establishments in Europe. It is situated at the gate of Pisa, and scarcely any traveller goes to visit it: it is called Rossore. It was established by the Medici, and is, at present, conducted by M. Batistini, with no little skill and judgment.

Between Pisa and the sea, from the mouths of the Serchio to those of the Arno, a plain of more than a league square has been formed by the recession of the water; the soil of which, intermixed with sea sand, was too sterile to be cultivated. It is covered with a fine turf, and ilexes have grown upon it; the whole plain constituting the domain of Rossore. It can be traversed only on horseback; M. Batistini offered to accompany me, and lent me one of his horses. In going from Pisa we passed the celebrated tower which has inclined for

ages, and entered immediately into an avenue of elms; it leads to the casino, or hunting box. We were already within the domain; meadows extend on each side of the avenue; the hay from which supports the stock, on the farm, in winter. But the meadows are soon lost in grass land here and there covered with ilexes and sweet briars, which give it the appearance of a neglected park. The Italians designate these wild grounds, which are in part wood and in part pasture, by the term macchie. We arrived soon after at the casino. It is a handsome square building, level with the ground, and of one story only. It has been decorated, by Leopold, with frescos, representing the chase.

Hence we directed our course northwards to the lands watered by the Serchio; we rode on the grass, and were shaded by the oaks: at some distance we passed a huge stable, supported by columns, over which was a hay chamber: the ground floor is divided into compartments, with hay racks. In bad weather the horses come hither to pass the night; and when the pasture is deficient hay is put into the racks.

Arrived beyond this, at an open glade, I stopped at a new sheep house, intended for a flock of two hundred Merinos, lately introduced into the establishment. They pass the winter in these sandy tracts, and the summer on the mountains. This arrangement, perfectly analogous to that of Spain,

appeared to be well adapted to them; the flock seemed in good condition, and I noticed some excellent individuals.

On the borders of the Serchio, where the pasture is richer, I soon met a breed of horses that usually feed here. It consisted of twenty mares, their followers, and the stallion. At a little distance was another similar troop; there were eight in the whole establishment. These horses are quite at liberty and perfectly wild, whether in the plain where they pass the winter, or on the mountain where they feed in the summer. They are under the control of man only in passing from one place to the other.

The only circumstance which struck me in respect to these animals, was the separation of the mares, who form so many small tribes, governed by their stallion. These tribes never mix together; if they did, it would produce mortal combats among the stallions. The character of these animals, their despotism, and violent jealousy, have something in them compleatly Asiatic, unknown among the horses of the north. Each tribe has its quarter of pasture, which they divide among themselves, without the interference of the shepherds. This division, strictly observed, is so justly shared, that each tribe finds an equal proportion of feed in the respective spaces assigned them.

These horses greatly resemble each other in

figure. Their limbs are fine, but their joints are weak and too flexible; they have low haunches, flat thighs, the loins and withers jutting out, the shoulders loose; they are stag chested, and the head is lengthened out of proportion. These are, as you see, wretched horses; they might do for light cavalry, but here they are good for nothing; too light for carriages, too large for the saddle, throughout too vicious; they are sold only to coalmen and the post.

M. Batistini was sensible of these faults, and went himself into Normandy to purchase six beautiful horses, to correct the defects and vices of the breed. I saw only two colts, the produce of this cross; the form of the head was improved, and they appeared very handsome.

As we left the part occupied by the horses, we directed our course towards the sea, and passed a forest of ilexes. I observed the leaves of these trees all taken off at the same height, at twelve feet from the ground, not a single leaf remaining below this level line. They told me the trees had been browsed upon by the camels, who thus formed a line in the foliage at the height of their heads, and that I should soon see a flock of these strangers.

Scarcely, indeed, had we passed the forest when we found ourselves in an extensive region, whose horizon was only limited by a forest, by the boundless sea, and by plains without end: it was a desert,

it was Arabia, for at our approach some camels, which were lying on the sand, rose up; and some others, which were quietly feeding on the shore, turned towards us their shaking heads and stupid looks. More than two hundred camels were scattered over this plain. They wandered silently about, waiting to return into the forest as the day became hotter. At a further distance we saw a group of females, followed by their young; but they fled at our approach, and trotted so quickly, that the swiftest gallop of our horses could scarcely have overtaken them. In this rapid run, the camels, by their leaping and bounding, displayed a vivacity which I should not have expected in them, and which their awkward figures rendered somewhat laughable.

The singularity of this coup d'oeil, the appearance of this solitude, the sight of some English ships on the Leghorn station, which, taking advantage of the fineness of the day, made some tacks along the shore, had, altogether, something so singular and oriental, that I should suppose could scarcely be found in any other part of Europe.

This Asiatic race of camels has existed in this region from the time of the crusades; they were brought hither by a grand prior of Pisa, of the order of St. John. They are more singular than useful, though they do all the labor in the culture of the farm; but it has not been attempted to

employ them elsewhere. They supply the mountebanks of Europe with them, who come hither to buy them at the low price of six or seven louis, and go with them from city to city.

We proceeded as far as the mouths of the Arno, on the south side of the farm. A herd of eighteen hundred wild cows was kept here the whole year, more fierce than the horses or the camels; it was difficult, and sometimes dangerous, to approach them. Their coats are of a slaty grey, very fine, as are also their limbs; their bodies are rounded, their forms pleasing, and well made; they carry their heads with a sort of grace, and seem to make a display of the immense horns with which nature has decorated their foreheads.

These cows give no milk; it would, indeed, be impossible to milk them, and it would not answer to try it, their milk not being good longer than three months, when their calves cease to suck. The latter are then sold to the little farmers in the vale of Arno. The cows are killed at seven or eight years old, for the hides and flesh. This slaughtering is usually dignified by their being hunted; the torreadors pursue them with the lance. The hunting is considered as a holiday, and it seldom takes place without an accident.

This establishment, the only art of which consists in allowing the powers and instincts of nature to act, is in the neighbourhood of the country

which I have described in the preceding letter, where civilization has, on the contrary, so far changed nature as not to have left a single original character of it. These two extremes are necessary to each other, for the Tartar culture supplies the industrious Florentines with the cattle they are unable to rear, and which they require in order to execute their rural processes, while, in their turn, they afford to the farmers of the desert a vent for its spontaneous productions. This connection is, throughout, reproductive; it enriches each domain, because it allows the farmers to adopt, exclusively, that system to which the nature of their land is best adapted.

The advantage of this balance shews itself in those countries, in which a due combination of the natural and artificial culture is favorable to those exchanges, even on the same farm; one serves to fertilize the other, both affording mutual assistance. This is the case in Lombardy, Belgium, and all other countries where art avails itself of the spontaneous vegetation of the soil, in order, ultimately, to obtain a greater abundance of the productions grown at the will of the cultivator.

LETTER VIII.

SIENNA, MAY 25, 1813.

Sir,

I PURPOSED in my journey to Sienna to pass through Volterra, and traverse the country which is called Maremme, or the land of pestilential air. A country which extends along the Mediterranean from Leghorn as far as Terracino, and becomes still wider within the land, as it approaches the first chain of the Appenins.

It is the theatre which contains the ruins and past glory of the ancient world; here every thing consists of recollections, and the traveller finds nothing but wrecks. Nature, exhausted by so many efforts, has ceased to clothe itself with new productions; the fields are sterile, the country without cottages, the waters infected, and become yellow with sulphur, and the forests producing nothing but old oaks, which have bidden defiance to ages.

But I shall better describe this country of ancient days, by a narrative of my journey than by declamation.

Having quitted Pisa, I regained the left bank of the Arno, as far as Empoli. There I left the great Florence road for that of Volterra and Piombino. This road, made by Leopold, is the only one which leads to the maremmes, and is conducted with much skill on the slope of the hills; it is only nine feet wide, but it is kept up with great care, and has more the appearance of a garden walk than of a great road.

Leaving Empoli I went directly south, and advanced towards the chain of hills which incloses the vale of Arno. I passed a mile under bowers formed by thick branches of trees, which adorn the banks of this river, and began to ascend the hill, on which I soon lost sight of this delightful Tuscan valley.

In proportion as I ascended, the vegetation became meagre and less abundant; there were, however, still vines and olive trees, but their verdure was pale, like the soil which produced it. Beyond the hill I passed through many small valleys, still animated by villages, vineyards, and cultivation. They were watered by some canals, but the habitations had not the pleasing appearance of the houses in the plain. They were grouped round the churches, but were neither decorated with flowers, nor enlivened by the appearance of pretty paysannes. I still saw country houses and chateaux; I could distinguish them at a distance by

the long plantations of cypresses, the only inhabitants of these regions.

Land is still here divided and cultivated by metayers; it produces wine, some oil, maize, sorgho, and corn; but these productions are ordinary, and the corn returns only three for one.

Saintfoin is also cultivated here, but to a limited extent, being destined only as food for horses, which are here very extensively employed, and for every purpose of conveyance. This scenery, tolerably picturesque, extends as far as Castello Fiorentino, four leagues from Empoli.

Castello Fiorentino is on the borders of the desert; beyond it all cultivation ceases, and we enter the maremmes. The surface is furrowed by great undulations, like the large waves of a deep ocean: its forms, however, have been softened by time and the hands of man. At different distances I perceived, over the tops of some old inclosures, walls, whose broken sides exposed buildings which seemed still to protect some old towers.

In the valleys, at a considerable distance from each other, were scattered a few dwellings, but surrounded neither by verdure nor gardens; and served only for the cultivation of small patches of maize or sorgho, so as to indicate that some wretched inhabitants still survived the destruction of their country.

Above all the summits rose that on which repose

the ancient walls of Volterra. At a distance this ancient city assumes, in the horizon, the appearance of an immense mass of buildings, of towers, and steeples. One would think it the capital of the middle ages, and that by its solitary situation, it is separated from all other countries, which have renounced the manners of their ancestors, and all respect for the past.

After proceeding nearly to the close of the day, I stopped to pass the night at an insulated house, called Castaneo. The influence of the foul air had become perceptible. The master of the domain had already abandoned it, and retired to Gimigniano. There was no one to receive strangers but a man of tall stature, whose paleness had, for a number of years, given him a cadaverous appearance. I had no other companion than my guide; my horse being released from his saddle and bridle, was turned out to feed round the house. I was scarcely under the roof, where hospitality had but little to offer, when the shaking of the walls, occasioned by an earthquake, which was thrice repeated, obliged us to retreat. The shock was slight, but in another place it was so violent as to throw down a house, and part of the church at San Casciano.

I rested myself on the trunk of a tree, whence I viewed the whole scenery before me. The land was in the state the Italians call macchie, on which

a few oaks were growing, and which time does not here reproduce, for being used wholly as pasture, the cattle eat all the young plants. These old trees, the vestiges of ancient times, indicate their connection with a period when man had power to protect his property; at present he no longer attempts it.

I was still sitting in the same place, contemplating, in a melancholy manner, these deserted fields, when I observed one of the little carts which are used in the vale of Arno; it came for a purpose similar to mine, to procure a lodging at Castaneo. Two children were lying in the cart, the mother walked by their side, without, for one moment, losing sight of them; she was rather handsome, but pale, and fatigued, and seemed overpowered by distress.

She took the children down with great caution, and not being able to procure milk for them, she gave them some water, which was yellow and sulphureous; she appeared agitated as they drank it, and seemed to count even the drops which they swallowed. These two poor children having been bitten by a mad dog, the wretched mother was taking them to Volterra. She told me a nail of the true cross was kept in this city, and that by touching with it the wound inflicted by the rabid animal, the morbid effect would be counteracted; I could not help expressing some doubts of its efficacy; she assured me that this remedy had been so used

in Tuscany, from time immemorial. I took the liberty of informing her, that cauterization was considered as a still more efficacious remedy; she added, that before the holy relic was applied to the wound, it was heated until it was red. I had nothing more to say, I was pretty well satisfied, and felt no uneasiness respecting the fate of the children.

The secret of cauterization, so modern in medicine, has thus been long practised in Tuscany. A single accident, and a single traveller, would have been sufficient to have made it known: but what traveller has yet gone to Volterra?

The inhabitants of the maremmes date their decline about the time of the plague, in the sixteenth century. It appears that its ravages destroyed a great part of the population. From that period it became unable to oppose the influence of the foul air; this influence increasing every year in proportion as the check arising from civilization diminished.

The reduction of the population taking away competition, lessened the value of estates, when the great Tuscan seigneurs took possession of them. From that time all productive industry ceased, and left no hope of return. All the attempts of Leopold to establish colonies in the maremmes compleatly failed; the colonists were carried off by the fever before they could consolidate their

establishments. The soil is become sterile, and it is even thought that the labor of man has contributed to its exhaustion. It is nothing but mere clay, the whiteness of which is a little changed by the mixture of sulphur, which, in this region, is produced in immense quantities. Sulphureous springs are seen rising from the earth; they are distinguishable at a distance by the fœtor, and also by the smoke, which gives a gloomy appearance to the country. These solfaterras have something frightful in them, and expel from the neighbourhood all the inhabitants. The fetid flames rise in volumes of smoke; the edges of these small craters are covered with sulphureous ebullitions, in the centre of which a livid water boils up.

Depopulated by nature, and taken possession of by the great proprietors, the only way of deriving advantage from the soil, was to leave it to its own spontaneous productions, and to allow it to be inhabited by a vagrant population, who, residing there only in the healthy season, consume by cattle the indigenous plants which it produces.

A delightful climate favors vegetation during the whole of winter; and at this time an exchange of population takes place between the plains of the maremmes and the Apennin mountains. By this means is derived, from each of these regions, the whole advantage, which under given circumstances, it is capable of producing.

The extensive pastures in the mountains belonged to communes not possessed of adequate capital; nor were the great proprietors of the maremmes possessed of more. It became essential, therefore, to establish an intermediate race of wandering shepherds, who had no property but their flocks, and who, according to the seasons, migrated with them from the mountains to the plain. They hire the pastures on which they feed their flocks, at so much per head.

Many of the great proprietors have again placed the cultivation of the land in the hands of farmers, who may be considered as under-tenants, surveyors being employed to render an account of the manner in which they are managed.

Such, Sir, is the system adopted in the maremmes; a system, in some respects, forced by the nature of things, and the circumstances in which they are placed; a system which must be permanent, for if it had no existence, there would be nothing in its place but a deep solitude. General and particular circumstances equally tend to perpetuate it, because the wants of the surrounding countries take off the animal production of the maremmes.

Four hundred thousand sheep, thirty thousand horses, a great number of cows and goats, are supported in these regions, and supply the total want of breeding them in the vale of Arno.

32034

The consequences of this arrangement have certainly created a desert in the middle of Italy, and peopled it, part of the year, with a race of half-savages, who run over these solitudes like Tartars; armed with long lances, and covered with coarse woollens and untanned skins. But this has been the arrangement of nature rather than of man; yet it required some intellect to derive, in spite of circumstances, a profit from a country which seemed destined to be only the domain of death.

In ceasing to produce vegetables for the use of man, some chemical phænomena are going on within the soil of the maremmes. The consequence is an immense accumulation of sulphur, salt, and allum. This maintains a great part of the population, particularly as the processes are carried on only during the season when there is nothing to apprehend from the foul air.

As we approached Volterra I was surprized to see the surface of the road quite white, and appearing very brilliant from the sun shining upon it. This was produced by gypsum covering the road. All the soil of this mountain is composed of it, and it is here that blocks of it are cut out for the statuaries and modellers. The road, thus paved with alabaster, seemed the approach to a palace of fairies, and imparted to the singular spot around me the character of a land of fancy.

Having ascended about an hour, I reached the

mountain on which Volterra is built. Convents in ruin, gardens abandoned, a few olive trees, old walls, and palaces without roofs, served to recall the ancient splendor of this city, in which still vegetate three thousand inhabitants, the greater part of whom are country people, or artificers in alabaster.

No where are the marks of the melancholy destruction of the works of the creation imprinted in a more sinistrous manner than within the walls of Volterra. Its pale inhabitants wander like shades in the midst of the remains of majestic grandeur. Discouraged by the appearance of so many ruins, thay make no attempt to protect even their own habitations against the fate which threatens them. They abandon them to the elements, and wait, with resignation, the periodical scourge with which nature seems to decimate them, every year.

I did not even find an inn in the city, and in seeking a lodging I was met by a well dressed person, who accosted me in French; our accents proved that we spoke the same language. This great national bond instantly took away that reserve which otherwise must have existed in so extremely short an acquaintance. He told me there was not an inn in Volterra, because the host could not maintain himself, and he requested me to lodge at his house, which I thankfully consented to.

The gentleman who had just conferred upon me such an obligation, was the receiver extraordinary of the district, and knowing him in no other character, I was surprised to find such an appearance of business in his house. It was formerly an immense convent, whose four fronts inclosed within their porticos an immense court. Workmen passed backwards and forwards in this court, and every thing indicated an industrious activity. I expressed to him my surprise at this circumstance: he said, that a few years ago, walking at his leisure, in the neighbourhood of the city, he came to a sulphur spring, and noticed the quantity of sulphur which the ebullition of the water threw on its sides. He knew that no one laid claim to this substance; and at that time it was become more valuable, because none was then sent to France, either from Sicily or Egypt.

He had some knowledge of chemistry; he procured Chaptal's work from Leghorn, and with its assistance he attempted to make some sticks of sulphur. He succeeded, and sent specimens to Marseilles. There was a demand for more; he was encouraged to go on; by degrees he extended the process, and he now makes forty quintals per week, which are sent to Provence.

In the evening we went to the theatre, for the most wretched city in Italy has one. This was very large, and, as light had been economised, we

found our way by the help of our hands. We paid only five sous for admission, we could not, therefore, complain of this penury of light. Some candles were, however, lighted on the balustrade, and the curtain was drawn up. The house was full; the performance was a translation of the Mines of Poland, a melo-drame from the Ambigu, for there are now no original pieces in Italy: the Italians confine themselves to translating such as are performed at the theatre de Feydeau and those of the Boulevards. The dresses and decorations were very tolerable. The comedians acted so correctly and naturally as to make me blush for our own, and greatly excited my interest. But my impression was nothing in comparison of that which was felt by the rustic and enthusiastic pit. The judges of the theatre of Volterra wept, and jumped, and by their shouts anticipated the danger incurred by the heroine, and expressed their mutual congratulations on the chance by which M. Pixericourt so dexterously arrived to rescue her. It does not answer to perform these melo-drames any where but in Italy.

From the towers of Volterra the prospect extends to a great distance beyond these sterile regions. The nakedness of the land is interrupted only by a few woods of cypress and ilexes, whose deep green, thrown on the yellow soil, seems to add to the solemnity of these funereal places.

From the depths of the valleys a perpetual smoke ascends from the solfaterras, sometimes, during storms, rolling like waves, and sometimes rising in columns towards heaven, like the smoke of a sacrifice.

Every thing is unexpected and extraordinary in this country, which seems to have exhausted the powers of its existence, and to be gradually returning to that desert state which must terminate the destinies of this world. For the time arrives when the soil, exhausted by the repeated labor of man, no longer produces the elements necessary to the formation of the nutritive sap of vegetables, while its chemical combinations compose, on the other hand, such substances only as are either inert or deleterious, which attack the principle of life, and slowly depopulate the regions thus abandoned by Providence to the scourge of time.

Thus we see nature subdued by civilization, and nature returning to her original state, as if unwilling any longer to support the human race by her fruitfulness. These two states so opposed, and yet so near each other, seem to have been thus brought together by Providence to shew man the limits of his power, and the extent of his weakness.

obvious, from the nature of the elements which compose it, that sulphurous hydrogen gas is evolved at the surface of the soil, independently of the constant presence of water. Should this be the case, it must be impossible to remedy it.

It must appear extraordinary that the cause of effects, so constant and so tremendous, should not yet be known; and that to the present time medical men and chemists should have been equally baffled in their conjectures. For facts, at once, contradict their hypotheses; nor, at present, have they been able to discover the source of that mysterious power of nature, which diffuses itself as an invisible fluid, without any premonition of its approach. The sky remains equally clear, the verdure as fresh, and the air as calm; this general serenity would seem to inspire confidence, and yet I cannot express the degree of alarm irresistibly excited on breathing this air, which is at once so soft and so deleterious.

The effect of this gradual destruction of human nature cannot be conceived but by those who pass through this country in the dangerous season. The melancholy inhabitants, by degrees, lose that color which is an indication of health; their complexions become yellow and livid; they are every day more and more enfeebled; a certain number is sacrificed before the end of the season, and those to whom Providence reserves a few more years of existence, scarcely retain courage enough to wish

it. They sink into extreme despondence, which hastens the close of life, extinguished, probably, as much by this moral feebleness as by the immediate influence of the foul air.

From this physical and moral depression of the whole population, results a periodical suspension of all the social relations, and of all the operations of human industry; it became then requisite to combine the processes according to these known data.

These are the combinations of rural industry in the country of foul air, which I have endeavored to investigate, because they appear to me to have been mistaken by travellers. I shall, therefore, attempt to describe them.

The great road from Florence to Rome passes the maremmes of Tuscany as far as Aquapendente, where we enter the Roman states. The nature of the soil, as well as the appearance of the country, is there changed. We no longer see those slopes of clay, the whiteness and nakedness of which so much fatigue the eye; a black and volcanic sand shews the fertility of the soil by the luxuriance of a spontaneous vegetation. For many leagues the road successively rises and falls towards the borders of the lakes of Bolzene and Vico. Round these lakes immense forests, which have grown for ages, extend from the Apennins to the shores of the sea. In the middle of these woods, which

LETTER IX.

ROME, JUNE 10, 1813.

Sir,

It is generally supposed that the foul air which depopulates the plains of Italy along the shores of the Mediterranean, proceeds from marshes and stagnate waters, which are, in all other places, the sources of this change in the atmosphere. This cause does, probably, exist in the Pontin marshes. But it cannot be attributed to the same in the maremmes of Tuscany and Rome, for I observed, in a former letter, that the maremmes had a considerable elevation; that the air and winds were unobstructed; that they included neither marsh nor stagnate water; and that this scourge operated with as much violence on the high ridge of Radicofani, as in the forests of Mount Soracte.

I cannot help attributing this deterioration of the air to the chemical constitution of the soil itself, which it has gradually acquired in this country of volcanoes, in the course of nature, and from circumstances which are unknown to us. It is

human industry seems to have forsaken, are extensive glades covered, as in the Savannahs of America, with natural turf, and with plants whose singular forms give an African character to this neglected country.

At certain distances we pass through cities and towns, whose historic names speak to the imagination, but in our days they appear only the mausoleums of passed generations, near which some melancholy inhabitants still reside, as if influenced by the desire of paying them a sort of devotion.

Round these cities are fertile gardens, and vines whose branches are not attached to trees as in Tuscany, but trained to treillages of reeds. Figs and aloes grow on all the ruins, which they decorate with their deep verdure and eastern forms. At a further distance corn fields scattered in the glades of the woods, exhibit, amidst this natural scenery, the only evidence of the presence and industry of man.

The crops of these fields are beautiful; the land has previously rested seven years in grass. It is so fertile, that immediately after harvest it is spontaneously covered with a vigorous sward. It then serves to feed immense herds of horned cattle, horses, and sheep. But after some years these pastures deteriorate, briars, reeds, and various plants with large leaves, choak up the soil; after burning them the land is ploughed. It is ploughed seven

times in one year's fallow, all which is necessary before wheat is sown, in order to destroy the roots and weeds. Thus prepared, the land produces a crop of eight for one, and immediately returns to a state of natural pasture, from which it had been brought with so much trouble.

Thus in this country, of which Viterbo is the capital, only a seventh part of the land is cultivated, the rest is left to spontaneous vegetation, and to be fed by flocks. The whole extent of the cleared land is, besides, very limited, because two thirds of the district consist of forests.

The vegetation of these majestic forests, thus left to nature, is too rich to serve, as in Tuscany, for the feed of sheep. The eye cannot penetrate their depths, and the imagination places, in their dark recesses, the manes of that ancient people who rendered those deserts illustrious; it respects their memory, and is thus gratified amidst the solitude of woods.

The sound of the axe is seldom heard here, for the value of the timber would not equal the expence of taking it down. It is used only in the smelting of iron ore, which is imported from the isle of Elba to Bracciano and its neighbourhood. These forests throughout are, besides, too far from markets to make it answer the purpose of felling them. The consumption of wood in this country is so small as to be scarcely perceived.

The whole district, the principal traits of which I have just described, is divided into immense estates, except in the vicinity of cities, whose environs extend over gardens and vineyards.—These vast possessions are, at once, the effects and the causes of the foul air, and have, for a long period, banished from the country the whole rustic population. Throughout the country there is not a village, a hamlet, nor, I may add, a farm-house, for all the country people live in the cities and towns; where the proprietors, the farmers, the laborers, the artisans, and the shopkeepers, all vegetate together. At great distances from each other, in the country, are seen isolated buildings called Casale. They serve for the purposes of cultivating the domains; but in these houses there are neither families, nor farming offices; they are merely places of shelter for the shepherds and workmen, in the season of labor. They retire thither in the evening to avoid the night damp, and to eat the provisions which they bring from the neighbouring city. They have nothing rural in them, nothing domestic, no mistress calls her children to the evening repast; the crowing of the cocks calls not the laborer to work, nor does the swallow here build her nest; nothing is heard but the cawing of the rook, which ominously hovers in the air over these melancholy places.

The flocks, which roam over these immense

farms, under the care of a few shepherds, are much superior to those which feed on the sterile pastures of Tuscany. The oxen here are larger and better shaped. Their immense horns give them a noble and commanding character, to which is added a certain fierceness of aspect, which they acquire in their wild state. All their movements are easy and regular; they have a pliantness and a gait very different from the northern breeds. They are also used here in all the labors of the farm, and even in carrying different articles of merchandize, in which they are preferable to horses.

At Ronciglione, at the foot of the mountains of Viterbo, begins that celebrated plain which surrounds the city of Rome; it is bounded by the sea and by a range of mountains which inclose it like an amphitheatre, from the mountain of Circe as far as those of ancient Etruria. The surface of this plain, thirty leagues long, and ten or twelve wide, does not appear level and smooth, as if water had rested upon it, but consists of an uninterrupted succession of undulations, which appear to follow no common direction. None of the eminences are, in their height, distinguishable from one another, but they, all together, so far interrupt the view that the whole is not seen until it is gone over.

"This arrangement of the soil, so peculiar to this country, shews, at once, that it is not produced by water, a fluid under the influence of uniform laws

and directions, but by a volcanic operation, of which every thing around proves the existence, and which always takes place with the utmost irregularity.

The valleys which separate the hills in the campagna of Rome, are neither very deep, nor are their sides very precipitate; the declivities are softened by time, by cultivation, and by the crumbling of the soil. Their summits are not covered with wood, they are naked and often bare of earth, but the slopes and bottoms are generally very fertile. Trees are scarce throughout this plain, which is now known by the name of Agro Romano. The meadows in the neighbourhood of Monte Rosi are still surrounded with stately oaks; but hence, as far as the mountains of Albano, are seen only scattered ilexes, beaten by the winds, and owing their preservation to chance alone.

Now and then, however, we saw in the horizon rows of sea pines; they alone afford shade to the flocks, and an agreeable clothing to these solitary fields. The appearance of this plain resembles the steppes of Tartary; like them it is covered with a boundless turf, on which grow tufts of thorns and briars. The lands are divided by hedges of dead wood coarsely cut, the bark of which has rotted off. These large inclosures separate the pastures intended for different flocks, and also preserve from their depredations the fields of

corn, the crops of which, in their turn, occupy the place of the natural turf. These inclosures contain thirty or forty acres, and belong to the domain whose casale is seen at a distance, an object rather of melancholy, than of pleasing contemplation.

There are but few inns or post-houses on the road; those of Baccano and la Storta belong to the Princes Chigi and Borghese; they are built rather in stile, and though solitary in the midst of the surrounding desert, tell the traveller that he is in the neighbourhood of Rome; which nothing else would induce him to suspect, until arrived at the Monte Mario, he at once discovers the Tiber, and the seven hills with all their domes and edifices; above which rises the cross of the Basilique of St. Peter, as the most mysterious and most sublime of all emblems.

LETTER X.

ROME, JUNE 20, 1813.

Sir,

Nothing in nature is more striking than ruins; they are melancholy mementos, marking on their broken sides the past which is never more to return. Numerous are the writers who have described the ancient ruins of Rome; various painters have traced their outlines. I shall therefore notice only the more recent ruins, which, in this city, at the present moment, strike the eyes and the minds of the traveller.

I shall speak neither of the Coliseum, nor of the Capitol, but I will endeavor to describe to you the whole of Rome, covered with ages and with glory, completing its destiny and already exhibiting an imposing ruin. I shall confine myself to the impressions which its view has excited in me; you will, perhaps, participate in them. I may, possibly, succeed in painting this grand scene of destruction, which is daily exhibited within its walls; this scene

is, however, grander than human languange can express, more melancholy than human melancholy, and more solemn than all human solemnities. It is the great festival of the dead, which nothing can duly celebrate but the cries of the wilderness and the waves of the Tiber.

I was at Rome in 1791; this city had, even then, a hundred and sixty-six thousand inhabitants.* It was splendid in equipages and liveries, and had many great houses ready to receive strangers; every thing, indeed, bore the marks of opulence and grandeur. I now entered Rome by the same road, and instead of carriages, it was covered with herds of goats, oxen, and half-wild horses, driven by black-eyed shepherds. They resembled Tartars; they were armed with long pikes, and wrapped in mantles; the air was clouded by the dust which rose from the feet of the cattle.

These shepherds and their flocks come every evening to seek an asylum within the walls of Rome, and escape the death which awaits them in the country. These errant shepherds, and their wandering flocks, thus take possession of those

* Gibbon says, "in the year 1709 the inhabitants of Rome, (without including eight or ten thousand Jews) amounted to 138,568 souls; (Labat, Voyages en Espagne and en Italie, pages 217, 218); in 1740 they had increased to 146,080; and in 1765 I left them, without the Jews, 161,899."—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Volume 12, page 429. Note.—*T*

quarters and palaces which have been abandoned by the inhabitants, who, in consequence of their reduced numbers, have been driven by the foul air more into the interior of the city. The gate del Populo, part of the Corso, all the quarter of the Quirinal, of the Trinity, of the Mount, and of Transtavere, are already uninhabited, and the people from the country have there taken up their residence. The population of Rome does not now consist of more than a hundred thousand persons, ten thousand of whom are only husbandmen, shepherds, or gardeners. There are now in Rome vast districts which are merely villages, and supply the place of the country habitations abandoned in consequence of the foul air.

So enormous a depopulation in the course of twenty-two years is almost unheard of. The political events of these twenty years have certainly had some share in this immense reduction, but the principal cause must be referred to the general circumstances in which Rome is placed, and to the effect of the pestilential air. This scourge increases every year. Every year it attacks some streets, squares, and districts; and every year its dreadful influence will increase, for it acts precisely in an inverse ratio to the resistance which population opposes to it; the fewer inhabitants the greater is the proportion of victims, and one funeral ceremony is always followed by many others.

Hence it is probable that we are arrived at that period of history, when this queen of cities will lose her splendor, and preserve nothing more than the glory of a name, which, in the lapse of ages, will never be forgotten. In Rome, as within the walls of Volterra, will be seen only an immense assemblage of monuments, palaces, and ruins of all ages; under the porticos will then vegetate the shepherds, the goatherds, and the husbandmen. The grotto of Evander will then no longer be sought for, he will seem to live again to be the king of this rustic people. Thus will terminate the history of Rome; long will she have survived her rivals, but like Athens and Persepolis, she will undergo the fate of every thing raised by the hand of man, she will be destroyed.

These marks of ruin, produced by the ravages of time, are every where imprinted in Rome. As there are more houses than inhabitants, no one thinks of repairing that in which he lives; when it falls into decay he changes it for another; he never thinks of repairing his gate, his roof, or his stair-case; they break, fall down, and remain on the spot where chance has thrown them. Thus a great many convents appear only heaps of rubbish; many palaces are no longer habitable, and have not even a porter to guard them. This universal abandonment, this Tartar population which fills the streets, the flocks which over run them,

and the general appearance already exhibit the character of decay and destruction.

Amidst this neglect in the care of private buildings, much attention is paid to those remains of antiquity which time has respected. Government has just adopted an extensive plan to remove the rubbish which conceals them: it is intended to bring them together, and group them so as to place these venerable remains in a point of view the most picturesque and pleasing.

Thus the whole space between the Capitol, the Temple of Peace, the Coliseum, and the Tiber, has already been cleared of the modern buildings, of the inferior houses, and of all the walls which had accumulated round Mount Palatine, and which obstructed the walking and the view in this noble inclosure. It is to be surrounded with a double row of trees, and the whole appropriated, exclusively, as a garden and promenade. The remains of temples and triumphal arches, will then repose among thickets and grassy banks; it will become an English garden, the hills of which will be the Palatine and the Aventine, and the buildings the Capitol and the Coliseum.

This is an excellent and beautiful idea. It offers to the ruins of the great ages the tribute of respect most worthy of them. I was particularly sensible of the grandeur of this plan one evening, which I passed in the Farnese gardens; I had gone down

to the baths of Livia; as I was quitting the gloom of their vaults, I observed a bright light diffusing itself in waves of purple through the whole horizon. It was the setting sun, but how beautiful was it this evening, at Rome! It seemed as if the king of light was solemnizing its last days. The shade of Trajan, from the summit of his pillar, hovered over this desolated spot. He seemed still anxious to protect the ruins, which were the only remaining vestiges of his empire.

But however much this great and noble plan breathes the spirit of respect for the past, it is merely an homage paid to its inanimate relics, and has no influence over the state of society in modern Rome. Every thing there appears to have been done formerly; nothing new is ever fashioned; every one is content to use that only which he possesses, as if under the influence of a presentiment which disinclines him from undertaking or attempting any thing. This torpor, in the social habits, has a powerful influence in accelerating destruction, because it paralyses exertion, and prevents reproduction. The artisan and laborer have no means of existence, and therefore soon disappear; the whole active population successively withdraws itself, and the loss of the consuming classes ruins, in its turn, that of those which are productive.

There is besides scarcely any city in which an-

mal food bears so low a price as in Rome. Provisions were calculated for a population of a hundred and sixty-six thousand persons; they are now divided among a hundred thousand. The only advantage arising from this reduction of price is the inducement by which it retains the population. It is also probable, that for a long period a limited population will concentrate itself in the middle of the city, composed of proprietors who will there struggle against the influence of the foul air, while the rest of Rome, abandoned to the elements, will be no more than an immense mass of rubbish in the midst of solitude.

This picture becomes striking in those districts of the city which have been a long while deserted; a singular mixture is there seen of town and country, of porticos and houses in ruins. I one evening witnessed this scene, at once so singular and grand, between the Coliseum and the Temple of Peace, in the desolated garden of a convent, now no longer existing. My attention was directed to the valley which separates the Palatine from Cælius; at the bottom of this valley I saw the arch of Constantine, and the way which the Romans termed sacred: at the summit of the hill of the Cæsars rose the palm tree, sent from Africa. It was marked on the azure sky as a last trophy of past glories, while on the other hill a row of cypresses exhibited a melancholy mourning for their departed glories;

and extended themselves, like a funereal bandeau, as far as the limits of the horizon.'

On the other side of the Tiber, towards St. Peter's church and the gate Angelica, I passed through streets entirely deserted, and where no other inhabitants remained but the shepherds, who came thither to pass the night, though they even found them but a dangerous refuge. All the environs of the Vatican are also abandoned to the shepherds: I was particularly struck with this loneliness in going, at break of day, to St. Peter's church. The sun was rising just at the moment of my arrival, the gates of the temple were still shut, a profound and universal stillness prevailed; I heard only the distant sound of the bells of the flocks which were returning to the fields. The obelisk rested on its brazen base, and the two fountains ejected their unceasing streams. Neither passengers nor travellers crowded the pavè, and I arrived at the vestibule without having met a single human being. The freshness of the morning, and the tints of Aurora threw an inexpressible sweetness over this divine solitude. I contemplated at once, the temple, the porticos, and the heavens; and, for the first time, my soul was impressed with the august ceremonies of nature when she gives and when she withdraws the light of day.

At length the church doors were opened, and

the bells solemnly proclaimed the beginning of day. But this Angelus in vain called the Christians to prayer; none came to implore the blessing of heaven. Alas! this temple, the most beautiful homage that the world has rendered to the true God; this temple is already in a state of solitude; the grass grows in its courts, and its sides are covered with moss.

Having lifted up the curtain which covers the gate of the church, I found myself at the entrance of that monument which every where excites veneration. I proceeded under the domes and reached the altar; a few wax tapers were still burning, but the odor of incence was not perceived,—it is no longer burned there.

A solitary female, an old inhabitant of the temple, approached me, and asked alms, which she had seldom the chance of receiving. The noise of my steps alone interrupted the silence of this sanctuary. The dead repose undisturbed in their tombs, but the living no longer come near them. In vain the walls display the wonders of art; there are no eyes to behold them; in vain the seven altars expect prayers and sacrifice; in these days of mourning, the sacrifice is to desert them.

Struck by the religious solitude which surrounded me, I stopped near the altar; I was seated on the steps of a confessional, and involuntarily repeated these words of Abner—Que les temps sont

changés! when a slight noise arrested my attention; I turned round and perceived an aged priest, who was come still to pour out his prayers at the feet of the Almighty. He also saw me, and approached me: he was advanced in years; his dress shewed that he was poor, and that he resided in the country, for his shoes were covered with dust: he sat down by me, but hesitated to speak: perceiving his intention I addressed him first; this temple, said I, in Italian, is very magnificent; yes, answered he, but fortunately it was built in former times, it could not have been built at the present period; no, I replied, I am of your opinion. My accent, no doubt, inducing him to suppose I was a foreigner, the old man asked if I were really so; I answered yes; O then, he replied, joining his hands, you may possibly tell me where our holy father is; yes, certainly, he is in France, at Fontainbleau! it is a great way from Rome, a very long way, father; and he lives and enjoys health; and is he ill treated? No, not hitherto; he lives in a great palace, and there is no doubt that his life is respected. Is it really true? O my God, and are you certain of what you say? very sure, father, and you may rely upon it.

Blessed be God, I am old and poor, I live in a village at some distance from Rome; I am come to pray, once more, at this altar, for our holy father; God has heard my prayer; I had scarcely

finished it when I saw you; a happy inspiration directed me to you, and you have been conducted hither by the hand of God to give me the only consolation I have experienced for a long time. My father, I said to him, there is a consolation still more certain, and taking his hand, I shewed him the eternal words, written in letters of gold, around the dome of St. Peter. Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram œdificabo meam ecclesiam; et portæ inferorum non superabunt eam.

The old man left me, his feeble steps conducted him out of the temple, and I, myself, left the sanctuary, which has no other protection than the powerful hand of God.

I know not whether I have succeeded in describing the peculiar sensation inspired by the present sight of Rome, and that of witnessing the slow but progressive ruin of the most celebrated of cities. Such an event is, indeed, common in history; but in our age, when new buildings are every where erecting, we are struck with astonishment to see time effecting a destruction unopposed by the resistance of man. There is something still more impressive in the last days of Rome, because, from our infancy, we have watched it, as it were, from its cradle; with Æneas we landed in Latium; with Numa we visited the fountain of Egeria, and built the temple of Vesta; with Scipio we ascended the Capitol, and in a short period this temple and this

capitol, the columns of Jupiter and those of St. Peter, confounded in the lapse of ages, will preserve no other distinction than the evanescent vestiges of inscriptions, which will alone enable us to discriminate the monuments erected by Antoninus to Faustina, from those which the Christians have raised to the eternal God.

LETTER XI.

ALBANO, JULY 4, 1813.

Sir,

I SHALL endeavor, as correctly as I can, to relate to you the rural and picturesque details of a short excursion I have just made into the domain of the Campo Morto. The very name will inform you that I am not going to describe smiling fields, or rich valleys, but the plains where the Romans have died.

I went part of the road which M. Bonstetten has described in his journey to Latium;* there is, indeed, a degree of temerity, in describing after him, that solemn scenery which he has painted so truly and so charmingly. But he travelled with the Æneid, which was his guide, and shewed him the place where he might retrace the city of Turnus and the camp of the Trojans. Whereas I took the same route in the steps of Columella, and of the poet who sang of shepherds and harvests. We

* This work may be had of J. J. Paschoud, at Geneva and Paris.

shall, probably, not meet each other on the road, which is equally open to the husbandman and the warrior; and I may venture to trace the outline of the same country, because I shall not observe the same objects he did.

The farm of Campo Morto includes, at present, the whole property of St. Peter's church, which is supported from its sole revenue. This vast estate is situated near the Pontin marshes, in the most unhealthy and deserted part of the Agro Romano, between Velletri and Netuno.

In this monotonous system of pasturage and flocks, the agricultural history of one domain is that of all the rest; and you will have a perfect picture of the agriculture of the patrimony of St. Peter, when you learn the practice of the farm of Campo Morto.

I left Rome with M. Trucci, the farmer of this domain. He was going to see his harvest, and was desirous of taking me thither, that he might explain to me his agricultural processes, and the rural details of his farm. At our departure the morning dawn began to illuminate the sky, and the first horizontal rays of light had just been projected on the monuments of Rome, and on the porticos with which its approach is decoratad.

We travelled on the great road to Naples. It passes through an unfertile country, as far as the foot of the hills of Albano; the prospect being dull

nourishment to the seeds of plants which the winds have sown on these fertile ashes.

Younger than the rest of the earth, it possesses the whole of its native fertility; it acquires a more lively tint, and an inexpressible vigor of vegetation, which calls back the first days of the world; solitary days, when industry, as yet uninstructed, had neither levelled the forest, nor turned aside the waters, nor committed foreign plants to the earth. Every thing in this domain of volcanos seems to have preserved the marks of a peculiar and spontaneous creation, for ever destroyed by torrents of lava, and for ever renewed by them. Proud of its vegetable pomp, it has no need of man to keep up its wild splendor, and he himself derives no other advantage from it than that of contemplating its silent beauty.

The woods which cover mount Albano, offered to the worshippers of God obscure and religious retreats, at those periods when it was supposed they could not serve him worthily but by a total separation from the profane world. In the bosom of these woods, habitations were erected for these solitary persons. There is one still remaining, which was the residence of the supreme chief of religion, during the unhealthy season. They afforded him no other magnificence than a pure air and an unbounded prospect. These holy residences

and confined. It is bounded towards the east by long lines of arches, formed to convey water to Rome, a massive colonade, which time has respected and covered with mosses and ferns. Towards the west the view is interrupted by a long chain of hills, on which are seen the ruins only of the middle ages. This great heap of rubbish is known by the name of Roma Vecchia. To the south mount Albano shuts out the view by raising its pyramidal head to the clouds.

The component parts of this mountain are very obvious as we approach it. It is of an unique nature, and has nothing in it similar to the plain on which its base reposes. Mount Albano is a distinct world, which Providence seems to have created a long time after the rest of the universe, to exhibit, as it were, the noble image of a volcano raising its throne of fire towards heaven.

One would have expected that this violent creation, the work of a destructive element, would have imprinted, on the sides of the mountain, the marks of a premature death; but this is not the case, the sides, on the contrary, spread out in gentle slopes, indicating nothing but the measured course of the several streams of lava, which, at different periods, have flowed from the summit of the volcano. The lava has filled up the hollows in these slopes, and smoothed the asperities, so that when cooled by time, and reduced to dust, they have afforded

are still inhabited in no other way; nothing remaining but walls and ruined roofs.

The Appian way, in winding through the plain, turns round the mountain. The new road to Naples leaves the old one at the foot of the mountain, and rises by a gentle and regular acclivity as far as the city of Albano. Placed in the midway, this city commands the Campagna of Rome, and the region of foul air. Its approach is announced by the mausoleums which bear the names of men illustrious in history, who have ended their days in these places. One bears the name of Ascanius, another that of the Horatii; the imagination adopts these names, and again repeats them on arriving at Albano.

At the entrance of this city, on the side next the sea, there is a garden planted formerly, which belongs to Prince Doria. For a long while the flowers have grown wild and the trees have never been pruned; left to themselves, they have extended their branches in all directions.

In this garden, old and neglected, like the surrounding natural scenery, we are impressed only with the recollections of the past, the melancholy image of which is called forth in the surrounding prospect.

At the other extremity of Albano the road is cut in a reddish rock, and descends, shaded by elms, to the bottom of a contracted valley; it se-

parates Albano from the ancient city of Aricia, which is now called Riccia. The Prince Chigi has inclosed this valley, as if to reserve to himself this beautiful spot: but the fence is broken down, and I penetrated, without difficulty, into this deep recess. It is surrounded by rocks, watered by a rivulet, and covered by a thick shade. The Prince, for a long time, has abandoned it to nature and the seasons; it is a place of perfect stillness, a hind is its only inhabitant; it feeds and wanders about in perfect security. A thousand birds, attracted by the same circumstance, come and fix their residence here. In all the different places to which chance has led my steps, I have found none, the beauty of whose natural scenery exceeds that of the whole of this valley, unless, perhaps, it may be that which embellishes the meadows on the banks of Flaon, in the vicinity of the city of Lausanne.

Seated on the roots of an old elm, I remained a long time indulging the impression which the grandeur of these woods, and the calm of this solitude, excited in me; O valley of Albano! O gardens of Aricia! why could I not remain longer in the midst of your groves? I have passed there but one day; why may it not return? that day which will never be effaced from my memory: vain wish, for every thing in the universe tends only to the future, while nothing in nature returns to the past, except the

heart of man, which alone regrets the days that are gone.

I quitted the park of Riccia, and went on foot, slowly up the road which leads from the valley to the village; it turns like a terrace round the hill on which it is situated. Before entering it, the road reaches a precipice, on which a wall secures the passengers; I leaned against this wall; at a distance I saw the sea, and to the left, near the line of the horizon, I could discern the mount of Circe. The interval appeared to be a plain of an uniform yellow tint. No habitations were to be seen; some forests only, by their deep green, interrupted the uniformity of the coup d'œil. At the foot of the mountain I observed some hills, which seemed to have sprung from the same volcano. There were some ruins upon them, and even some habitations, which I could scarcely see, so much were they covered with vines and shrubs. Among these small towns, they shewed me that which still bears the name of Lavinia. A secret charm held me in this place, whence, without effort, I gazed over all the country described in that Virgilian geography, which we stammered out in our early life, and which we still repeat in our older days.

I observed below me, in the first part of the landscape, a vast garden, inclosed by nature. It was regularly included within a circumference of rocks. The soil of the garden was of the color of

ashes, and perfectly even. It was watered by a stream which came from the park, and an incredible quantity of legumes and fruits vegetated promiscuously together. Astonished at such an extraordinary fecundity, I questioned my companion, who informed me that this fortunate piece of land was the crater of an ancient volcano. From the time of the deluge it had been filled with water, which formed the lake of Ariccia, on the borders of which, Virgil says, the sound of Turnus's warlike trumpets was heard, when he armed to attack the Trojans.

Pope Alexander the Seventh ordered the water of the lake to be lett out, and gave the possession of it to his nephew, the Prince of Chigi; it has ever since been a part of the family estate. I, at length, quitted this place, which so many travellers have passed, and where so few have stopped; I ought, however, to point out its situation. It may be seen at the top of the ascent to Riccia, above the wood, and before the gate of the town. Thence, at one view, may be seen every thing that nature has of solemn, ancient, and boundless.

I passed through the town before the palace of the Prince Chigi, which overlooks all these valleys; and I again entered a wild country, whose woods extend from the declivity of the mountain as far as the city of Genzano.

These forests obscured the whole country, and I

remarked the same urbanity in all the *capo*, or directors of the herds and of the work-shops, which I saw on this farm, a character which was contrasted with the abject brutality of the shepherds and common laborers, whom I saw working or going about the farm. M. Trucci informed me that the fattore, and all the principal persons in the campagna of Rome, were citizens and not villagers; that all their families resided in Rome or the neighbouring cities, but that the shepherds and day laborers came from the Sabine mountains and the Abruzzes, for with the exception of some poor families domiciliated among the ruins in the small towns of the Agro Romano, there was no other indigenous population in the maremmes of Rome. Thus even the Romans are strangers in the fields of Rome. The fattore ordered some horses to take us over the farm, and, while I waited, I examined this noble but melancholy habitation. It consisted of an immense kitchen, and two large rooms on each side of it; beyond which were three other rooms equally spacious, but they were all alike unfurnished, and were even without windows. This formed the ground floor of the body of the house. Six similar rooms, in the next story, were used as corn chambers. One only was furnished, and served to lodge the principal officers. The two wings of the buildings contained large arched stables; they were both cool and ventilated. Over these were the hay chambers.

should have thought it a desert, if we had not perceived a church, the only asylum, in this country, open to rural devotion. The architecture of this Christian monument resembled the stile of the Grecian temples, and, for a while, made the imagination, on beholding it, doubt the worship to which it was dedicated. These profane recollections, and this vague uncertainty, remained with me on going to the border of the lake Nemi, which is near this temple, and, like it, consecrated to the sublime and religious feelings of the soul.

We arrived at Genzano, after having passed the wood of Nemi, and we did not quit the road to Naples until we were beyond the city. On leaving mount Albano, we turned to the west to go towards the port of Netuno, on a road which was scarcely visible on the grass.

After proceeding an hour and half we came to the casale of Campo Morto. The fields of corn and the herds of cattle alone announced the vicinity of the house. There is no other habitation but this vast casale throughout a domain which extends from the foot of the mountain, almost to the sea. Its architecture is noble, but it is discolored by time, lett down, and compleatly stripped.

The fattore, or superintendant of the establishment, came to receive us; his manners were polite and obliging, his language very correct, and every thing proved him to be a well educated man; I

These stables are a great convenience on these farms; they are used only to accommodate the working cattle, when taking their bait at the noon hour; except at this time, they always feed in the open air. There is only one female in this house, both old and ugly; she is employed to cook for the officers only, for though they are for the most part married, their wives live constantly in the cities with their children, and the shepherds always bring their provisions with them.

Neither on the farm nor on the contiguous ground are there any marks of care or neatness. We saw neither trees nor gardens, nor vegetables. In answer to my reproaches on this negligence, they said that the cattle destroyed the young plantations, and trampled down the vegetables, which they attempted to raise; that it was thus more convenient to purchase them in the neighbouring cities when a cart went for bread. These cities are, indeed, surrounded with vines and fruitful gardens. Moreover, the expence of conveyance, which, in our little farms, requires so much to be economised, is nothing on domains where cattle are reared, as there is always a superabundance of them. A little hay is put into the cart, and some bread for the driver, and thus provided, he often goes sixty miles without incurring any expence.

This superabundance of stock is the only luxury of these farms; neither a fattere, a capo, nor even

a cattle driver, will ever think of going on foot. Always on horseback, the officers armed with muskets, and the shepherds with lances, they gallop over the plains, and there are always horses in the stables saddled and ready to go out. Every person on the farm has two assigned to him. Some of these horses are old servants, and are employed to serve as examples to the younger ones; but the greater part consists of the latter, which the keepers amuse themselves in training, and which are intended for sale when they are used to the bit and saddle. Those which are designed for draught are sold in their wild state. In Rome there are coachmen well skilled in breaking them.

An attention to the studs of horses was formerly a great object with the Roman seigneurs. At that time they managed their farms by fattore, and had breeds which they called by their own names; thus, even in 1791, I saw some bronze-colored horses, which they called Borgheze; they resembled the horses of Xerxes, and served as models to the artists, who studied at Rome. They had formerly been painted by Guido, attached to the car of Aurora. At present the titled races are extinct and intermixed with others. The seigneurs have lett their farms. The property in the cattle belonging now to the farmers, they breed only some black horses, of a tolerably good shape, and which are adapted to the saddle or the

carriage, without being preferable for the one or the other.

As we were on horseback, the fattore led us to the fields where the harvest had just begun. At a distance, on the sea coast, I could distinguish large breadths of corn, of a deep yellow color, which seemed to extend a great way on the undulations of the soil. At length the reapers appeared like an army ranged in order of battle, having their chiefs on horseback, with lances in their hands, in a firm attitude. We passed many carts, drawn by large oxen, and laden with bread, which was going to feed this army. Soon I saw before me a long line, composed of a host of harvest men, embracing, in its vast extent, an immense breadth of corn, which silently fell under the edge of their numerous sickles. Twelve of these chiefs were on horseback behind these lines, watching and animating them. At our approach they all, at once, set up a loud shout; it made the air ring, and the whole solitude tremble. It was the salute of the workmen to the master.

The carts soon after stopped under some oaks, which Providence had preserved, in the middle of the plain, to afford shade to the harvest men. A signal being given they quitted their work, and this long troop filed off before us; there were nearly as many women as men; they all came from the Abruzzes. They were bathed in sweat;

the sun was intolerable; the men were good figures, but the women were frightful; they had been some days from the mountains, and the foul air had begun to attack them. Two only had yet taken the fever, but they told me, from that time a great number would be seized every day, and that, by the end of harvest, the troop would be reduced at least one half. What then, I said, becomes of these unhappy creatures? They give them a morsel of bread and send them back. But whither do they go? They take the way to the mountains; some remain on the road, some die, but others arrive, suffering under misery and inanition, to come again the following year.

The repast of this day was a feast; to celebrate his arrival, the master had purchased at Genzano two cart loads of water melons, to be distributed among the reapers, with the bread, which, in common, is their only food: the expressive looks of these miserable beings were fixed on these large melons, and I cannot describe the joy painted in them at the instant the large knives cut into the beautiful fruit, exposed its blood-red color, and lett out a sweet perfume and a cooling juice.

The reapers have three meals every day, by which their work is divided into two parts. They are allowed two hours in the middle of the day for sleep; there is no danger attending this, but when the dew and the night have cooled the earth, they

still lie upon it, sleeping upon moist grass, in the midst of sulphureous exhalations. They lose, they say, too much time, in going back to sleep under the shelter of the casale, sometimes at a great distance in these large farms.

The corn is left two days to dry in the bright sun before it is tied up; after which they place it in shocks, at certain distances, in the middle of the fields; fifteen days after which it is threshed under the feet of horses, for the cylinder, which is used in Lombardy, is not known here. A few years ago they suffered the straw, after this operation, to be dispersed by the winds, but since, in consequence of an order from M. Degerando, it has been put into heaps, for the purpose of being burned on the approach of those clouds of grasshoppers which often devastate this country. This practice has been found so useful that it will not be relinquished. These heaps of straw laid, at regular distances, over the country, and always on the highest parts of the undulated ground, resemble African villages, and still add to the wild character of the country. The corn is immediately carried to Rome, being seldom left in the casale.

When we left the harvest fields we proceeded towards a forest; it was spread like a curtain before us, and concealed the view of the sea, which was beyond it. This forest continues almost

without interruption, along the shore, from Tuscany to mount Circe. It is full of immense oaks, which, on account of the vicinity of the sea, admit of exportation.

Between the fields and the forest we met a herd of a hundred oxen, with large horns, and of a grey color. They were old working cattle, and were not frightened at our presence. They are always at pasture when not at work, at which time they are fed abundantly with hay.

Further off some hundred wild cows seemed undetermined, on first seeing us, whether they should attack us or save themselves by going to the wood; they determined on the latter, and the herd set off on all fours, preceded by the heifers, and followed unwillingly by the bulls, which galloped heavily behind the herd. They were the first to stop, turning back with rage, and, as if ashamed at running away; they breathed from their wide nostrils and seemed to defy us. The keepers followed at full gallop; the sight of them and their encouraging the herd, restored their confidence, and they suffered us to pass; an instance of the wonderful respect of animals for man.

These cows are not kept to give milk; the sale of calves, and that of their mothers when six or seven years old, produce their only profit upon them; but as their keep costs but little, this produce is not unimportant on the farm. The cows

are estimated at forty livres a head. A hundred cows, with their followers, thus produce four thousand livres. There are many farms which have more than a thousand.

When we were near the wood we were shewn great numbers of pigs, some of which concealed themselves in the shade, and others fed in the plain. There were two thousand of these animals, and they belonged to the farm of Campo Morto. They ran all the year in the immense tract which extends near the sea. They might be taken for wild boars. They are, however, of the domestic breed, of the black race, and being fatted by the nuts and acorns in the forest, their flesh is excellent.

We took a different way in returning to the casale, in which we met, in succession, sheep and horses.

There were nearly four hundred horses on the farm, of which a hundred, at least, are trained, and used by the keepers of the herds. The rest, of different ages, were wild and used only in threshing corn. All these horses are not of a despicable breed; they have nothing to distinguish them; they are tolerably well made; they are strong, courageous, and sound winded; they have done very well in the cavalry; I have seen some which have gone through severe campaigns heroically: they are all black, the Neapolitan horses being, on the contrary, all spotted. The horses

of the herd-keepers are singularly patient and docile; they remain in vedette, many hours, exposed to the rage of the flies, and go thence, running at a brisk pace, when the cattle keepers have occasion to turn any of the animals. They are much less fierce than the horses of Tuscany, and they are more easily caught and trained.

This life of the herdsman, who ranges over all the maremmes, has something in it solitary and independent, which is not without its charm. For to the profit he derives from taking care of the herds, he adds that of those which are his own property, and which he mixes with his masters. We see the shepherds, armed with gun and lance, place themselves under the shade of oaks, where, from their horses, they can observe the direction which the cattle take in feeding. There stationary for hours, their black eyes survey the whole horizon, and the smallest event which occurs is immediately perceived by them. Sometimes a hare or a rabbit is lying down within their reach; they get off their horses, leave their lance, and taking their gun, pursue them with the instinct of well trained dogs, and thus secure their prey, for which they watch like foxes. They very often ride quickly to overtake the cattle; sometimes, also, they are seen darting like lightning, when two savage bulls happen to meet. For then those fierce animals begin to send forth their hollow cries, and throw

the volcanic dust into the air, but scarcely have they given way to their jealous rage, and commenced the combat, when the keeper, his lance held down, falls upon them in full gallop; he strikes them, he wounds them, he frightens them, and he separates them; they run away at the sound of his voice, ashamed that the blood which reddens their wounds, has not flowed in a more noble combat.

The sheep were pastured on the highest part of the farm; there were four thousand on the domain; but I saw but a small part of them, the principal flock being then on the mountains. Nevertheless I was able to examine the breed. There are two perfectly distinct ones in the maremmes of Rome; one is that which they call Negretti; they are small animals, with erect heads, short legged; they are well covered with wool, healthy, and in every thing resembling the breed of Dauphiny, excepting that their wool, though of a good quality, is chocolate colored. There are here eighty thousand Negretti sheep, whose wool it was intended to have manufactured into the dresses of all the mendicant monks in Italy, as also into the great coats of the shepherds. They now send a great quantity to the manufactures in Dauphiny, where they mix it for the great coats of the soldiers.

The other breed, of which they reckon more than six hundred thousand, is that of the Pouille.

It is, without contradiction, the most beautiful variety of sheep I have, any where, seen. They are upright, singularly open, and strait on their limbs; their gait is regular; grave and slow in their movements, they tread softly on the pastures. The back is large and strait, the carcase cylindrical, and the head is much lengthened, and has two long hanging ears, which beat on their cheeks. These beautiful animals, whose wool, of a brilliant whiteness, almost equals that of Arragon, have the defect of producing it only on the upper half of the body. In return, the ewes give an extraordinary quantity of milk.

As mutton is not good in Italy, and little eaten, they kill all the tup lambs and even some of the ewe lambs, and they milk the ewes to make cheese. It is not unusual for a single ewe to produce three piastres in the season. In the middle of May the flocks go to the mountains of Norcia and the Abruzzes; whence they return in the middle of October, when these immense regions are inhabited all the winter by these different kinds of cattle, and by the shepherds who have the charge of them. They all, also, wander silently in these vast deserts, where there are neither villages nor cottages, and which Providence seems to present to us as a grand specimen of the destinies of this earth.

LETTER XII.

VELLETRI, JULY 6, 1813.

Sir,

The campagna of Rome is covered every evening with a thick and chilly mist. It does not rise above a few feet from the ground; but it is generally considered as one of the causes of the fever, which destroys the inhabitants. This mist is so cold that after having gone over the farm of Campo Morto, as I have said in my preceding letter, we finished the evening near a fire in the vast kitchen of the casale; it was Midsummer-day, the 24th of June.

Seated on our chairs, which dated their age, at least, from the Pontificate of Sextus Quintus, I interrogated M. Trucci on the rural details of his farm. His answers appeared so interesting that I shall endeavor to repeat our conversation. It will, I think, give you a more accurate idea of the agriculture of the environs of Rome, than all the declamations in the narratives of travellers.

"I have conversed with some foreigners, said M. Trucci; I have also read some books of travels

in Italy. It has seemed to me that in passing over our vast plains and macchie, travellers supposed that these deserts belonged to no one, and that the first occupant had a right to build upon them and cultivate them, much in the manner in which Abraham took possession of the land of Canaan. It would seem, if we believed them, that all the inhabitants becoming monks, none remained to till the soil, and that this was the consequence of the pontifical government. But they mistake; not only all the lands around Rome consist of distinct properties, belonging to persons of fortune, or are held in mortmain, but the soil and pastures so neglected in appearance, belong all to separate farms, and are subjected to a regular course of agriculture, the peculiar processes of which I shall proceed to explain."

"Undoubtedly our unfortunate country, desolated by an annual epidemic, and having neither villages nor a rural population, is divided into tracts so extensive, that it is impossible to apply to them the usual course of agricultural industry, which delights the eye of the traveller, and exhibits a scene of plenty and happiness. You will be surprised when I assure you, that the whole territory of the maremmes of Rome, forty leagues in extent, is divided only into a few hundred estates; and that the number of farmers to whom this immense cultivation is entrusted, does not exceed eighty. We

are called Mercanti di tenute, dealers in land, and in reality we are more merchants than agriculturists; for we all live in Rome, where we keep our accounts, and direct the whole, while the fattore execute it. We make no attempt at change or improvement, because, considering the deficiency in hands, it would be impracticable in farms so extensive; we attempt no speculations in our system of culture, much preferring the ascertained profits which the processes in common use insure to us. It appears more simple to increase the profit by augmenting the extent of the land under cultivation; and in this respect we have been singularly favored by the gradual decline of our great proprietors. Formerly all the farms were lett with a considerable stock of horses and cattle; by degrees the proprietors sold this capital, and endeavored to lett the land alone. Since that time there have been no great owners of flocks, who could undertake these farms, and they are all centered in the eighty persons before alluded to. Our commerce is become a species of monopoly, unavoidable from circumstances, but sufficiently profitable in its results to induce the expectation that the greater part of the Roman property will eventually fall into our hands."

"But this alteration, much as it commits to industrious men the property of the flocks and the cultivation of the land, will have, however, no other

effect than that of again restoring the capital of the soil to the floating capital which serves for its cultivation; but we shall not, on that account, change the system of culture, which is established by the very nature of things; and there cannot, at this time, be two modes of cultivating the maremmes of Rome."

"You may ask me to what causes I attribute this great extent of property, and this deficiency of rural population, in a country which was, formerly, so highly cultivated and so thickly inhabited. I will give you my opinion on the subject."

"There is no doubt that at the period of the prosperity of the Roman empire, all the environs of the capital of the world belonged to men of fortune, and that they raised, in it, many villages, parks, and country houses; in consequence of which the whole population of those who previously possessed and cultivated the land was removed, and slaves substituted, who alone cultivated it and had the care of the villas."

"But the slave is not attached to the soil on which he labors, the slightest circumstance dislodges him, and he disappears. The fall of the empire; the removal of the seat of government to Constantinople; the invasion of the Barbarians, and the establishment of Christianity, in a short time, swept off the proprietors, the slaves, and the capital with which they were purchased, and there were no

country laborers to supply their places. These estates having thus remained the property of the capitalists, who were either ruined or had emigrated to the East, necessarily fell very much in their value. Those persons who happily had preserved their fortunes, purchased them on easy terms, and thus increased their property. In the course of time, the papal families continued to accumulate immense estates, and by this succession of events this singular phenomenon has been produced, by means of which that part of Europe which was formerly the most flourishing, and the most populous, has been reduced to the state of a wilderness."

"You may, indeed, be surprised, in these later periods, in which Italy has enjoyed perfect peace, that the modern European agriculture, which has been carried on with so much activity and industry, and so much tended to increase population, should have had no influence on our deserts, particularly as they are situated near a great city, within the reach of the sea, and all the outlets, and possess the advantage of a more fertile soil than most of the states of Europe."

"It seems natural, indeed, that the states of the church should have received an impulse from the general tendency to improvement, which took place in the economical institutions of the last century. They have, on the contrary, remained totally

strangers to it, and, as in the early ages of the world, have known only the patriarchal agriculture, which will finish their history as it began it. This stationary state must, necessarily, be attributed, first, to the division of the soil into large estates, because it excluded all rustic population; and secondly, to the influence of the bad air. This dreadful scourge is, perhaps, a consequence of the depopulation, of which it is become a constantly active cause, a cause which it is impossible to overcome, for in order to oppose the ravages of this air, it would be necessary, in one season, to subdivide the estates, build thousands of farm-houses, and people them, all at once, with some hundred thousands of inhabitants. Unfortunately, however, a colony can never be established but by a system of successive multiplication, by means of which it would constantly furnish increasing resources."

"But they who give plans for the amelioration of the Roman territory, always leave out two things, the capital necessary for this improvement, and the proprietors of the estates, who ought, at least, to be consulted, before their property is disposed of. It must be either the government, the proprietors, or the farmers, who can furnish the capital necessary newly to arrange, and if I may use the expression, to fashion the campagna Romana to the European figure. Neither the one nor the other possess these capitals, for, on account of the

foul air, they cannot make the improvement gradually; and to transform, at once, the rural constitution of an extensive country, would require so frightful a sum, as none of the economists who have advised the measure, have ever attempted to calculate."

"It is, therefore, to a cause, in constant operation, that must be attributed the neglected condition of our great estates in the maremmes, rather than to indolence, or deficiency of skill in the farmers, for all the healthy parts of the states of the church exhibit a culture nearly as active and productive as that in Tuscany. No where in Europe, perhaps, can be seen a more excellent vine culture than in the neighbourhood of Albano and Velletri; and nothing displays more active industry than the horticulture round our cities."

"I have thus related to you, continued M. Trucci, the agricultural history of our country. You have seen at what period it was abandoned by the proprietors, and by the slaves who cultivated it; you have seen how time, the Barbarians, and earthquakes, have destroyed cities without creating villages; you have, in short, seen how this country has fallen into the hands of a small number of proprietors, without supplying the means necessary for its cultivation; and you have, also, before your eyes, the melancholy vestiges of that scourge which destroys the human race in this solitude."

"These, Sir, are the circumstances under which the great farmers of the campagna of Rome are obliged to cultivate domains of many square leagues in extent. They lease to us these deserts. They have, within their reach, neither villages nor hamlets, and for their protection they have only a single farm-house, in which there is not even a family. There are neither flocks nor agricultural implements. They never hear even the barking of dogs, for there is no one to whom they could express fidelity and affection."

"But these fields are fertile and covered with a rich turf; they are situated under a beautiful sky, and the farmer, by means within his reach, has adopted the arrangements necessary to call forth the native riches of the soil. We have thus had no alternative but to adopt the practice of an unstationary people and of a desert country, in which actual circumstances we find ourselves."

"We began, therefore, by stocking our pastures with sheep, because they multiply faster than other animals, and the soonest produce a profit to the farmer. A few shepherds are equal to the care of thousands; and we found, in the mountains of Sabina and Abruzzes, men accustomed to a solitary life in deserts. They agreed to look after our flocks, not for wages, but on condition of having some of their own mixed with ours. The profit of these belongs exclusively to them. The grass

continuing to grow in the winter, supports the sheep at this season; but in the summer the drought and the fever render the pastures too arid and dangerous; and at this season we send our flocks to the ridges of the Apennins, in search of good air and fresh pasture."

"All the pastures are not adapted to sheep, and the necessity of feeding them, requiring that we should have horned cattle, we have collected on our farms, herds of wild cows, of that beautiful breed which is still found in Hungary. These animals, more hardy, bear the heats and summer climate. The herdsmen, who look after them, are exposed to the danger of the malignant air; some of them die, and all of them become pale; at length, however, some are able to endure it, and become accustomed to the danger, for habit renders every thing supportable to man."

"To watch and drive these herds in these immense plains, the keepers must be on horseback; horses are, likewise, requisite to keep up an intercourse in a neighbourhood, which is widely spread, and, on this account, we have been obliged to establish studs. They are the least productive of any of our branches of industry, but they are necessary. Lastly, we have woods, and we have stocked them with swine. We have marshes, and we have filled them with buffalos."

"By the multiplication of all these animals, we

soon covered our plains, and increased our capitals. In this single domain, continued M. Trucci, I possess what are worth more than four hundred thousand francs, and as many on two other estates, which I also farm."

"Our shepherds receive no wages, we only engage to board them, and to maintain their little flocks, from which they derive their profit. These shepherds are all aborigines of the mountains, and strangers in the maremmes; they never bring with them their wives or children, and thus never become a source of local population, or a fixed domicile."

"As soon as the capital of our flocks was formed, we naturally endeavored to derive a profit at once from their labor, from their manure, and from the fertility of the soil, by growing wheat; a crop which could easily be stored up, or carried away, and the mechanical culture of which requires few processes and little care, for whatever requires these is necessarily proscribed in a wild country where cattle feed."

"To cultivate corn we have selected the most favorable situation in our plains, and we have folded sheep, during the season, on the place marked out. In spring we collect the oxen which range, at large, on the pastures, and yoke them two and two to the ploughs; but having no ploughmen on the farm to direct them, we are again under the

necessity of getting day laborers. They go, every week, to Rome, where the farmers pay them for six days' work. These men come, principally, from the mountains; but many are also inhabitants of Rome, or of the small cities in the vicinity."

"These laborers earn more than forty sous a day, exclusively of the bread which the master provides for them, and which he gets from Rome, as there are no means of making any in the casale. He engages as many workmen as there are pairs of oxen, that the work, which he superintends, may, if possible, be compleated in one week. I often yoke a hundred ploughs at once. During this time the oxen are fed with hay, for very severe work is required of them; and as soon as the ploughs have finished, the laborers are sent away, and the oxen return to their pasture."

"The first process is only to break the turf, and expose the roots to the sun; in the course of a month they are burned, and the land is again ploughed, so as to break the clods of turf, and to go deeper for the couch grass, which has been loosened in the soil. These two ploughings are followed, at equal intervals, by two others, in a direction across the first, so that by the middle of September the earth has been stirred in four different ways."

"The roots and pieces of turf, which have not been destroyed in the summer, are then raked

together; they are burned and the seed is sown; it is covered by a light superficial ploughing, which pulverizes the soil and ranges it in regular furrows. The harvest takes place the following summer, after which the land is left for many years without culture. It is covered in autumn with fresh plants, and remains in grass until it is again its turn to be ploughed up. The average produce of our corn is six for one. In the Pontin marshes it is as high as twelve."

"You see by this what is the ordinary arrangement of our farms. The surface, every where irregular, consists of slopes, hills, and low grounds. In some places the higher grounds, which have been injured by time, have no longer any vegetable soil; they are not ploughed, and sheep only feed on the arid pasture. Some of the low grounds are, in like manner, too wet to produce corn; they are, therefore, left as meadow, and the best parts are reserved for hay, which is wanted on the farm. There must still be deducted from the arable part, the whole of the forests, and those parts which are too thickly covered with oaks to admit the plough. Thus our cultivation extends only to that part of the land which is level, and the least overrun. The portion sown with corn occupies, in general, a ninth part of this space; another is in fallow; the seven other parts are in pasture."

"The farmer pays rent only for the arable part of the farm; his lease is at seven piastres the rubbi of land, which makes eighteen francs per Paris acre. All the land which is not cultivated, is not considered in this rent, and it is often that from which he derives his greatest profits, for the farmer keeps almost all his horned cattle there, his pigs, and his buffalos."

"A rubbi of land, rented at thirty-six francs, supports, during the winter, seven ewes and their lambs, or, indeed, an ox or a horse. The sheep produce nearly fifteen francs by their fleece, their milk, and their lambs; it is therefore a gross produce of a hundred francs on the seven ewes. From this must be deducted thirty-six francs for the winter's feed, fifteen for the expences on the mountains, as much for the care of them, and for incidental expences. There remain to the farmer about thirty francs of profit on the keep of seven ewes, that is, four francs fifty centimes per head, equal to that of the flocks in Spain, and superior to that of the Carmague. The profit on the cows is much less, their feed comes to thirty-six francs per head; and their profit is limited to a calf, which, at three months, is sold for forty francs. They would, thus, save nothing, if they did not keep them in the macchie, for which the farmer pays no rent. The horses, which it costs more to feed, produce to the farmer about two hundred

francs when full grown; formerly they did not sell for more; but the war has since occasioned a demand for them, and they now sell for three or four hundred francs. The best of all our branches of economy is that of pigs, considering that their keep costs scarcely any thing. They live only in the woods and marshy grounds; but there are few farms which have such opportunities of keeping them."

"To give you a general idea of our farms, one with another, I must inform you that I pay for this a rent of twenty-two thousand piastres,* which, supposes an extent of three thousand rubbi, or six thousand acres, of cultivable land; I have nearly as much that is not fit for the plough, and it is there my pigs and my cows principally feed. My three thousand rubbi are divided into nearly nine equal parts of three hundred and thirty rubbi each; one of these is in fallow, another in corn, the seven others in pasture. On the two thousand three hundred rubbi, which remain in grass, I support four thousand sheep, four hundred horses, two hundred oxen, and I reserve a portion for hay. In the macchie I have seven hundred cows, and sometimes nearly two thousand pigs."

"My expences are limited to paying the rent of the farm, to purchasing bread for the workmen, and to the entire maintenance of my army of shep-

* A piastre is four shillings and two-pence, English money.

herds, superintendants, and the fattore; to paying for the work of the day laborers, of the harvest men, &c. and in short, to the expence of moving the flocks, and to what, in large farms, is called the extra charges, the amount of which is always very high. There must also be deducted from the gross profits of the flocks, about one tenth, which belongs, in different proportions, to my chiefs and to my shepherds, because I support this tenth at my expence."

"We have also, in this mode of culture, to sustain great losses on our cattle, notwithstanding which I must acknowledge that our farming is profitable; I average about five thousand piastres of annual profit, besides five per cent. on the capital of my flocks. You see then that the lands in the campagna of Rome, so despised and in such a state of wildness, lett at the rate of eighteen francs the Paris acre; there is an immense quantity in France which does not lett for so much. They would, doubtlessly, lett for more, if they were divided and peopled, but not in the proportion supposed, for the secret in large farms consists in their economy; and nothing on the subject of agricultural profit is so deceptive as the appearance they present to our view, for the profit depends solely on the amount of the econominal combinations, and not on the richness of the productions displayed to the eye."

LETTER XIII.

TERRACINO, JULY 13, 1813.

Sir,

I HAVE just been over the Pontin marshes, and have had an opportunity of examining them with a good deal of attention, having accompanied the inspector-general of Genie. He went to survey the new drainage canals, which the government has opened, with the view of completing, if practicable, the great works undertaken by Pius Sextus.

This manner of travelling was particularly desirable at this time, on account of the escort which attended the officers of Genie, to protect them against the banditti, who rendered the approach to the marshes still more dangerous than the pestilential air.

This race of banditti has existed from time immemorial, in the mountains of Sabina and the Abruzzes. It is scarcely possible to destroy them, because they are rooted in the population of the country. They are not mere companies of robbers, who have neither homes nor property, running

about under a thousand disguises, always flying, always preparing in retired places sudden attacks, the plunder of which they divide at a great distance; and having no fixed residence, they are always in advance of the police. The hordes of banditti with which the frontiers of the kingdom of Naples are so much infested, are no other than the villagers who inhabit the neighbouring mountains. The men who pursue this occupation have property and families; they are employed a part of the year in rural labor; but as this work, among these sterile rocks, is not sufficient for their support, nor to keep them from ennui, the attraction and almost irresistible propensity for pillage and murder, induce them to join together, to arm themselves to attack travellers, and often also the houses and inhabitants of the plains.

The greater part of the population being enrolled under the banners of some leaders, they have constantly under their orders a little army always ready to enter the field, and as promptly dispersed as reunited. They take, for each expedition, only the number of men which is requisite, and unless taken on the field of battle, the police knows not where to find them; for returning instantly to their homes, they resume their country dress and occupation; they are then only peaceable peasants, united under the protection of their clergyman and their mayor, whose indulgence to

them is unlimited, and, as I have been assured, for very good reasons.

Some of the chiefs only are well known, and they are exposed to the continual pursuit of the gens d'armes. Within five years many of them have been taken and executed, without the zeal of the survivors being, in the least, relaxed. Many of the banditti have perished in the conflicts with the gens d'armes and escorts; many have also been surrounded and taken in the expeditions. It was thought these executions would have terrified them, but it only made them more cautious; for to them the habit of brigandage is only a mode of life, to which, they well know, the danger of the scaffold is annexed; and they are not more under apprehension than the sailor who is exposed to the danger of storms.

The most formidable of the chiefs, and who, for the last five years, had escaped all the pursuits of the French police, has just been taken; he is called Pierre le Calabrais. The people of Rome simply call him la Calabreze, and he figures, under this name, in all the histories told of him by the people, who are always fond of the marvellous. To enoble himself, the Calabreze assumed a political character, and the air of the Chief of the Roman Vendée. He called himself Emperor of the Mountains, King of the Forests, Protector of the Conscripts, and Controler of the Road between Florence

and Naples; but what lessens his glory is, that he was equally a robber under Pius Septimus and under the French government.

Setting aside the merit he would assume as leader of the party, he has acquired much in the character of chief of the brigands, which he has supported with considerable talent. This man, who is only a mountain peasant, exhibits a singular mixture of rapacity and devotion, of barbarism and loyalty; he particularly boasts of his humanity; never, he affirms, has he shed a drop of blood except in battle, and he has always severely punished the acts of cruelty which his troop was but too much disposed to commit. I should think this must be true, for I witnessed the regret excited in all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood at his apprehension; they considered themselves no longer secure against the cruelties and assassinations of these people.

The government is, at this time, negociating a treaty with his successor, Gaetano, similar to that by which Sextus Quintus succeeded in suppressing the robberies committed previously to his pontificate; which was by arming the different bands, and making them destroy each other.

The soldiers of le Calabreze, distressed at his arrestation, and wishing, on any terms, to prevent his being executed, sent a messenger, a female fruit seller of Rome, to offer submission on their

part; they proposed, for thirty sous a day, to protect the road against all other bands. In return, it was promised not to put into execution the sentence against le Calabreze, but only to transport him to Corsica.

The treaty was concluded, and a few days after Gaetano informed the officers of the gens d'armerie of Sermonetto, that he had to give them a pledge of the execution of the treaty. To receive it, an officer went to a place agreed upon, in the mountain. There Gaetano presented him with four heads, which he affirmed were the heads of four brigands who had been killed by his troop, but scarcely had he returned to Sermonetto, when he found the bodies of four laborers of the place, whose heads they had cut off in the olive wood.

He demanded another interview with Gaetano, and reproached him severely for his want of good faith. He acknowledged that he had not been very nice, but that considering one head as good as another, he had thought it better to cut off the heads of four unknown persons, than to assassinate the banditti, who, in reality, were his good friends. Specious as this reasoning might be, the officer replied, that if this were the manner in which he kept the treaty, the Calabreze should undergo his sentence. This threat had such an effect, that they promised fully to execute the conditions of the treaty, and I have already seen some of them,

who came to Terracino to assure the safety of the road; and when I saw them I easily conceived the alarm they must excite in the travellers whose security is to be entrusted to them.

Velletri is the last city we pass before we come to the marshes. It is situated on the southern declivity of mont Albano. The view extends from thence over the vast desert of the marshes; it is bounded on the east by the mountains of Sabina, and to the west by the wide sea. The environs of this city are planted with vineyards, admirably well managed. The vines, in regular lines, are skilfully tied to treillages made of large reeds, thus presenting suites of espaliers as far as the eye can reach. There are pretty houses in every vine field, and the whole country exhibits the most chearful and active exertions. Thus, in these estates of the church so decried by the economists, we find, on quitting the region of foul air, the most vigilant industry.

But this region is very near Velletri; we had scarcely gone half a league, descending through the vineyards, when we reached the plain and the wilderness. The road, as far as Cisterna, goes through a wild and uneven country, formed by the currents of lava. It is full of cork trees, with broken trunks, and yet adorned with a few farms and corn fields.

There are no marks of human existence beyond Cisterna. An immense property, belonging to the Prince of Cajetan, extends as far as Tor tre Ponti;

the relay, two posts and a quarter distant. This part does not yet belong to the marshes; it is a picturesque and woody country, and in the immense glades of the forest are rich pastures and abundant crops. The shepherds' cabins, of a circular form and covered with reeds, are grouped, in the plain, at certain distances, like the kraals of the Hottentots. Some buffalos are seen feeding near these kraals in the high grass, the growth of which is promoted by the moisture of the soil in these Savannahs. They walk, heavily, over the beaten tracks which lead to the muddy ponds, to which they are attracted by instinct. They take delight in these waters during the heat of the day. From their great weight they gradually sink into the mud, covered with the marsh plants, nothing being seen but their savage heads. Towards the evening one of the shepherds comes on horseback, sets up a great shout, and strikes the water with his lance; the buffalos toss about and answer him with hollow bellowings; they dart from the ponds, carrying, like the river gods in the fable, a coiffure, made of long mats of marsh plants, which they drag after them into the meadows, like the garlands of Bacchanals.

The marsh commences a little before Tor tre Ponti; the road is formed into a causeway, and rejoins the ancient Appian way, which it had left below Albano; it continues, in a strait direction,

as far as Terracino. On the right, and lower than the road, begins the canal called Naviglio Grande, on which Horace sailed in going to Brinde, and which Pius the Sixth repaired, at the same time with the road. The plan of this able and unfortunate sovereign was to take the advantage of a fall of seven feet on the level of the marshes, from the highest point to the sea, by opening parallel drains, at certain distances, to take off the water. Across these lines he intended to form secondary drains, at an angle of forty-five degrees, and in the same manner parallel with each other. On this plan the whole surface of the marshes would have profited by the drainage. Only two of the principal parallels, with their inlets, were finished, but its compleat success convinced the French engineers, that the only way to bring the whole marshes into cultivation, was to finish the drainage on this plan; and they are now employed in doing it.

The great parallels do not run over the plain in a transverse direction from the mountain to the sea, because, along the shore there is a ridge slightly elevated, about a league in breadth, the soil of which, composed of rubbish, obstructs the passage of the water. This line, covered with trees, forms a forest, which, to the sailors on all this coast of Italy, resembles a mysterious girdle concealing this view from profane eyes.

All these parallels extend from north to south,

the whole length of the marshes, and fall into the sea at Bocca di Fiume, near Terracino.

The Appian way, now covered with a fine sand, crosses this space under a shade of elms, not planted by art, but which were preserved on the sides of the road when Pius the Sixth formed it anew. These elms growing irregularly, offer shade both to the road and the canal; one post-house is thus joined to another by a long communicating road, and this passage is so quickly made, and with so little fatigue, that on arriving at Terracino, we are surprised to find we have gone over so much ground.

In the whole of this passage there is not a village, nor even a single house, for the use of the post and the accommodation of travellers. Pius the Sixth built large inns at nearly equal distances; he raised them in the midst of these solitudes, as great monuments of his pontificate. These buildings have something singular and noble in their architecture, which I can compare to nothing. They include immense stables, lodging rooms, and barracks; but they are all unfurnished, grand and wretched, sumptuous and destitute of every thing. The beings who inhabit these palaces of the desert are ghastly, almost always naked, and eaten up by the fever. The miserable guides can scarcely harness and drive the half-wild horses which they put to the carriages. The horses, taken

from pasture, seem indignant at the temporary servitude imposed upon them; they tremble, stamp their feet, bite the bridle, until the instant they set off; they then dart forwards with a fury not unattended with danger. This increases when, on the road, they pass horses feeding at liberty. This is the usual character of the horses in the Pontin marshes, and on this account they have acquired the name of Scampatores.

The whole of what borders on the two sides of the road has been drained, but it has not been rendered healthy; it has not even been found that the drainage has contributed, in any degree, to render the air more salubrious; it remains as dangerous as the rest of the maremmes, but instead of producing only reeds and rushes, the soil being drained, is covered with a beautiful turf, and produces crops which give from twelve to fifteen for one. No where, except in Flanders, can more beautiful wheat be seen. But Pius the Sixth, when he began this superb system of drainage, failed to establish here, at the same time, a system of population and culture. He confined himself to making immense grants of these lands to his nephew, the Duke of Braschi, and to some other great proprietors; they established only the general system of the great estates of the maremmes; that is, a common farm-house, from which large herds of horned cattle, of horses, and buffalos, could be attended to, the latter

having been substituted for sheep, for which the soil was too wet. The driest lands are reserved for the cultivation of corn. Fallows are more frequent here than in Latium, because the soil, like that in America, is quite new in cultivation, and weeds spread so rapidly that it is necessary, every second year, to clean it with the plough, and prepare it for the growth of corn.

In the drained lands, near the feet of the mountains, and in no other place, are to be seen rich crops of maize, hemp, and legumes. The inhabitants of Piperno, of Sermonetto, and of all the villages situated on the declivity of the mountains, hire portions of land, sufficiently near them to be cultivated without their quitting their homes. I measured some plants of maize, which were sixteen feet high, and some of hemp nearly as large.

On all the banks of this canal, there is a principle of vegetable life, the energy of which, as in India, seems to increase in the ratio of the destruction of human nature; and yet to the life of man, it seems to offer every thing that can support and delight it. The land extends before him in a perfect level, and presents no obstacle to his steps. In the sky shines an unclouded sun, whose rays are lost in masses of foliage. A thick and nourishing verdure springs from every part of this fertile spot. Flowers, without number, marked by the most beautiful colors, display themselves under the

shade of elms. The banks of the canal are covered with enormous fig trees, whose flexible branches hang over the water, and present their saccharine fruit to the waterman. Among these fig trees grows the aloe brought from the east, whose stems rise up like the wax tapers in the sacred flambeaux. Willows, oaks, and elms, defend these flowers and fruits from storms; and to increase the thickness of their foliage, the shoots of the vine, perpetuated from age to age, climb along the trunks as far as the tops of these great trees; hence their shoots extend to the branches of a neighbouring tree, and like the lianes of America, pass from one bank of the canal to the other, and cover it as with a tent. In autumn innumerable bunches of grapes hang in festoons, and invite the birds to feed upon them.

But all this luxury of nature is displayed in vain; it decorates only a desert, it is admired only in silence; wild animals, only, appropriate to themselves these riches of the creation: herds of wild boars turn up the earth to get the roots of vegetables. Frightful buffalos roam about the meadows, or lie in the shade of the woods. The hawk quits his native rocks to hover, in a perfect calm, over this desert, which he considers as his domain. There are seasons in the year when flocks of birds of passage come and rest here, and to them these days must seem days of festivity. In the midst of these wild animals now and then appears a man,

but he shews himself only in a hostile attitude. Sometimes a shepherd pursues, with the lance, an irritated buffalo; and sometimes a brigand from the mountains, concealed among the flowers, or in the thick tufts of the fig trees, waits, his eye on the watch, and his gun charged, the passage of the traveller. Should the unfortunate stranger escape this peril, who knows but the air, so pestilential and yet so soft, may convey its poison into his veins?

I cannot express the singular impression which this perpetual contrast between vegetable and animal life made upon me, in this country, more singular, perhaps, than any in the world. I was charmed and terrified at the same time, and in some sort, I saw a great specimen of life in general, which an unknown and unsuspected danger incessantly menaces, while our imagination clothes every thing around us in a way that conceals from us the constant peril; thus we never think of it. But here it is seen and inspires a gloomy terror.

I was occupied with these reflections when we came to a part of the road where the causeway had been cut through, to open a passage from one of the new discharging canals. The engineers were examining the works, and I placed myself so as to examine the vertical state of the road, which its section exhibited to the view. This road was the Appian way; and ages, if I may so express myself,

were laid open before me. About three feet below the level, I could see the ancient pavement made by Appius, resting on a mass of masonry; above this large pavement was a second, in like manner supported by masonry, and raised about a foot above the other. This was a new pavement, made by Trajan, and serves for the foundation of a layer of flint, two feet thick, which is the foundation of the new road formed by Pius Sextus. The ancient method of constructing pavements is still continued at Rome, not on plain sand, as is our custom, but on actual masonry, well bound together by mortar and flints, so that the pavements in the streets are like so many walls buried, and extended under the surface of the ground.

We left our carriages near this opening in the road, to go on horseback to the middle of the plain, with a view of examining some works, the progress of which had already been interrupted by the season; but the workmen all attended this day of inspection. We were conducted by M. Zaccaleone, a deputy in the legislative body, and undertaker of these works. We crossed with him immense Savannahs, where the horses went up to the ham in grass; we kept as much as possible near the trees for the sake of the shade, for it was past noon, and the heat was excessive. As we advanced we drove the buffalos before us, until they were all collected near the new dug canal, and having

no further retreat, they made a stand and assumed a menacing attitude. The workmen on the canal instantly set up great shouts, and the buffalos, alarmed at a noise unknown in these deserts, took flight all together, and remounting the sides of the canal, disappeared.

The engineers examined the works, while I surveyed the country around me, and contemplated the activity of so many laborers in this work of human genius, planned at Paris by M. de Prony, and directed from such a distance; the result of which was ultimately to convert these deep solitudes into elysian fields. This incredible power, derived from civilization, so great as to invent, plan, and execute, at such a distance, excited in me an astonishment, which placed this singular country before my eyes still in a new point of view.

The part of the marsh we passed over was not yet drained, and instead of fields and prairies, we found only reeds, growing among willows and oaks; the verdure was pale, and the general aspect grey and monotonous; but before us, towards the sea, rose that curtain of forests to which I have before alluded. It took us an hour longer to reach it; the ground was soft, and the steps of the horses made not the least noise; it was, however, sufficiently firm to bear us, and we ran no risk of sinking while we kept the paths in the middle of the

reeds, made by the buffalos and the wild boars when they quit the forests to go to the Savannahs.

We, at length, reached the wood; the atmosphere immediately changed with the aspect of the country; the soil was improved; we again saw mosses and oaks. These trees were of an enormous size, and yet not so high but the shoots of the vine reached their tops. These forest vineyards preserved a perpetual freshness under their shade, and served as a place of refuge to a world of birds and insects. From this proceeded a peculiar buzzing, which announced life, and seemed to repose on the stillness of the marshes. We came, at last, to a little rising ground, where a long table was spread; it was ornamented with a covering of flowers, and we found, there, the fruits of Italy and the wines of France, with ices and sherbets. This refreshment was arranged by M. Zaccaleone. Never did I partake of a more singular entertainment. It had no other decoration than the vast natural colonade, with its festoons of lianes, and no other harmony than the stillness of the forest and the singing of birds. It was the feast of the Druids, celebrated in the fields of Rome, restored to their primitive wildness, as in the days of Evander. The hill on which we rested was composed of the ruins of an elegant villa; possibly, it belonged to one of those men who have advanced the civilization of the world: it is now only a heap

of rubbish in the depth of a forest; and the oaks which overshadowed it have already perished at three different periods since the destruction of the country of the Romans.

Before we quitted the great road we were joined by a little man in black, almost dying with heat. He came from Velletri, with an escort of gens d'armes, which had been ordered to attend us in this part of our route.

He came eagerly to us. He proved to be a French man, a true Parisian, and almost as much astonished to find himself, in the heat of the summer, in the Pontin marshes, as I was to see him there. I could not avoid expressing my surprise to him, and he thus explained the reasons for his being with us.

"I, a long time, said he, solicited a place, thinking that I was not born to remain in obscurity. At length, after much waiting, I learned that I had been appointed commissary of the police at Velletri. I went immediately to one of my friends, a well informed man, to enquire where this city was. He informed me it was in the department of Rome, and that to get thither I must take the diligence to Lyons. I did this, and at length, from diligence to diligence, I have arrived here. The place is pleasant, and I should be well enough satisfied with it, did not its inhabitants speak a language not a word of which I can understand. I said then to myself, as

this does not do, I must adapt myself to it; man habituates himself to every thing; but the further I proceed the worse I get on. You may judge, therefore, what a pleasure I enjoy in having the honor of talking with a Frenchman, who can understand and answer me."

"Notwithstanding this I have reason to be satisfied with the people of Velletri; they received me with much politeness; but there is no society there, and I have not the smallest amusement. For you will scarcely credit it, having had a wish to walk a little in the environs, which are very picturesque, the gens d'armes advised me not to do so, for fear of the brigands; they assured me they were very eager to catch commissaries of police, and that they made nothing of assassinating them."

"Wishing not to expose myself, I was obliged to keep at home. Judge how happy I was to learn the arrival of the gentlemen inspectors; I soon profited by the opportunity afforded by your escort of taking the air, and having the honor of presenting my devoirs to you."

The little commissary, overjoyed to find himself with Frenchmen from France, as he considered us, breakfasted with us in the forest; he ate, he talked, and he laughed, seated at the table, as if he had been at a guinguette on the Boulevards, thinking no more of Velletri, or the brigands, than if there had been none such in the world.

I should have been glad to have prolonged my stay in this noble solitude, but I was under the necessity of accompanying my fellow travellers; of repassing, with them, the paths of the marshes, of returning to our carriages, and bidding farewell, perhaps, for ever, to these deserts and these woods. My friends again took the road to Rome, I turned towards the south to go to Naples, and and we separated from each other, at the Bocca di Fiume, without knowing whether the chances of life would ever bring us together again.

LETTER XIV.

NAPLES, JULY 18, 1813.

Sir,

The states of the church terminate a little beyond Terracino, and we arrive at Fundi, the first city of Campania, and of the state of Naples. It is distinguished by the irregularity of its buildings, and the wretched appearance of its inhabitants. It resembles the cities in the south of France, and by its ancient towers reminds us of the feudal times, when the population crowded within the boundary of cities, to obtain, behind their ramparts, a protection which the country could not afford to its inhabitants.

On entering the kingdom of Naples, we thus recognized something Gothic and feudal in the situation of the villages, which are placed on the summits of hills. They are inclosed within old walls, which being favorable to the growth of parasite plants, their luxuriant vegetation is displayed on the battlements, a dress which nature seems to have adapted to ruins.

The cities and the country through which we passed, shewed, at first view, that the state of Naples has not participated in that age of glory, in which, at the same time flourished, in Italy, the genius of arts, and the spirit of independence; a spirit which alone raises the character of nations, by inspiring them with the love of whatever bears the stamp of greatness.

The vestiges of that brilliant period are visible in every other part of Italy, and one of the beauties which its aspect presents, consists in the elegance and grandeur of the works of architecture, for which it is indebted to past ages. A just taste is equally conspicuous in all her edifices; and a similar perfection is exhibited in the decorations of her monuments, and the simple structure of her village habitations.

This universal system of elegance and taste blends itself with the works of the country, and the primitive forms of nature, compleating, by their combination, the general effect of the landscape.

The result of this gives not only a succession of picturesque scenery, but a striking view of the life and happiness enjoyed by the inhabitants of different countries visited by travellers. The opinions which they form of them, may, indeed, be erroneous, but they are, nevertheless, necessarily affected by them either agreeably or otherwise.

In the best part of Italy are never seen, these

dirty and irregularly built villages, the abode of indigence; nor such wretched cottages, in which are indiscriminately lodged not only the families, but their animals and their crops; nor in these villages, and it is, perhaps, the only secret charm they stand in need of, are ever seen, as in France, those village churches, shaded by lime trees, and consecrated to the eternal, by simple hearts and unskilled hands.

The churches in some of the smallest villages of Italy, would, in other countries, be the ornaments of cities. The chapels we meet with, isolated in the woods or on the sides of the roads, please by their graceful architecture. The hamlets, and even farm-houses, are built with a sort of rustic elegance, to which the Italians attach no great value, because their eyes are accustomed to it, and because it is the prevailing fashion of the country.

This universal sentiment of the correctness of architecture, could have no other origin than the long influence of custom, by which, during so many ages, the national taste was formed. The Romans were the first authors of it, and the age of Leo the Tenth, by restoring their prosperous days, has preserved in this ancient country of the arts, the traditionary knowledge, which transmits from age to age, the distinguished power of embellishing the earth with edifices; for architecture, you know, is a direct science, the best works of which may be imitated,

and perpetuated at will; while the mysterious power of the pencil of Raphael was individually his own, nor could he transmit it to any one.

The kingdom of Naples did not feel the influence of the period in which a taste for the fine arts was restored. Conquered by the Normans in the eleventh century, it received from them, as the fruit of the conquest, only rude manners and the feudal system, in its whole extent. This system exclusively influenced the state of society in the middle ages, and we might, even not long ago, have gone to Naples to study its institutions and their consequences.

From the obstacles opposed to it by the Gothic institutions, the modern European civilization has been slowly progressive in this kingdom. We there recognize, in every thing, the marks of an epoch anterior to its present usages; and in spite of its fertility, this southern country presents a rude physiognomy, the consequence of a vigor in nature unsubdued by the industry of man, a state which the earth but rarely exhibits.

In the midst of these fertile fields numerous families live in wretchedly decayed houses. They seem to be in a state bordering upon absolute indigence, such marks of disorder and neglect appear all around them. This disgusting appearance of poverty is, principally, the result of an habitual indolence, the effect of climate, much more than of real distress.

It requires so little to be fed and clothed in this charming climate, that indigence is scarcely a calamity, and does not prevent the increase of families. I need produce a single proof only of this, the immense population of the kingdom, which, in the last census, amounted to six millions, three hundred and forty-five thousand souls.

The correctness of this census cannot be doubted; it was taken by the mayor of each commune, for the purpose of assessing the levies of men and money, and it cannot be supposed that they magnified the number. The great increase in the numbers of the people must be attributed to the long peace enjoyed under the Bourbon dynasty. This state of quiet was equally experienced in the interior of the country; for the government itself had diffused a certain inertness through all the branches of the administration; each succeeding day passed as the former, no one was anxious, no one disquieted himself, and all enjoyed a continued security, which time and custom had consecrated into law.

It is true that nations brought up under the influence of this moral languor, are, without motive or wish to improve their destiny. But it has been thought, until the present period, that the Neapolitans have been very indifferent to fame. It has been supposed that approximating more to the simplicity of nature, their ambition was satisfied with

the supply of the first wants of life, and that the constant impressions which, without effort, they derive from the rich gifts heaven has bestowed on their country, rendered them unsolicitous of artificial embellishments.

According to the disposition naturally excited in the Neapolitans, by their manners and laws, it may be supposed that agriculture is almost the only art they practise. Without vanity or ambition, they seek neither the ostentation, nor even the exterior appearance of prosperity, which, in all other places is such a source of envy. The liberal arts are unknown to them, and even the mere mechanical ones. All the articles of luxury, and most of those of the first necessity, are obtained from strangers. They give in exchange the overplus of the produce of their fertile soil, for in these rich lands rural labor is abundantly rewarded. The burden of cultivation is light and the produce immense.

Corn is cultivated in the plains and valleys, producing often eight or ten for one. The land on which it has ripened, instead of resting a year, as was the practice of the Romans, is immediately prepared to receive other grain. These different crops grow, in volcanic ashes, with an unheard of vigor. Every autumn and every spring thus renew the expectations of the farmer, and the seasons seldom disappoint him. The seeds of the wild clover, which are indigenous in the south, are

often sown after harvest on a single ploughing. On seeing it in flower one might suppose a large purple carpet had been spread over the green fields, to embellish them, as it were, with a new dress. Mulberry trees and elms grow round the fields, and protect them with their shade; they also support the vine, which extends along their branches; the same soil thus bearing several crops at one time.

The greater part of the kingdom is covered by high mountains, some of which retain the winter's snow during the whole year. They are, however, not so high, though almost as rude, as the Alps. Time has, moreover, not diminished their primitive fertility, and to the present day they have preserved the vegetable richness bestowed upon them at the creation. On their highest summits are extensive pastures, on which numerous flocks feed during the summer; their thick verdure being uninjured by the heat of the season.

Below the region of herbage begin the chestnut forests, concealing the sides of the mountains under their shade. These trees become so large, that a small number of them is sufficient to cover an extensive space. I saw some whose branches, pendent to the ground, formed, of themselves, perfect domes. Protectors of these mountains, these centenary trees resist the violence of the winds, and retain by their roots the soil which would, otherwise, be thrown down in storms.

The lower declivities of the same mountains are sheltered by woods of olive trees. They spring up and grow as in their native soil, almost spontaneously. The farmers have no other trouble than to collect, during the whole season, the ripe olives which have fallen down.

Around the villages fig trees grow, among rubbish, lemon trees in the gardens, and fruit trees on the borders of the land.

We found, for the first time, orange trees near Fundi, not in pots arranged in dull lines, nor spread on espaliers, but free and wild as the oaks of the forest. There, as in forests, are seen orange trees of all ages. Pullulations from the same roots grow together round an old trunk, while others, spontaneously sown, push their young branches through the foliage. A little stream, seemingly turned out of its course, runs, in silver lines at the feet of these trees, whose roots it refreshes. One might ramble or repose a long time in these woods, plucking oranges, whose weight bends down the branches; the very abundance of which may, perhaps, a little abate of the involuntary admiration excited by the view of these forests, so unlike any thing in our climates.

This richness, peculiar to the southern zones of the globe, explains, at once, the charm which attracts the indolent and the thoughtless. In these delightful countries nature is bountiful and fruitful.

Every flower is fragrant, every branch bears fruit, and strangers are soon naturalized, where the atmosphere is always warm, where they find food in every production of the earth, and where their sight is gratified by the beauties of the creation and the immensity of the sea.

Having passed Fundi, the road reaches the foot of a chain of hills which separates this plain from that of Capua. A long ascent, cut on the edge of a precipice, leads to the village of Itri. It was from this precipice that, a few months ago, the poet perished whose verses have celebrated the seas and navigators; happy had his tomb been watered by other tears than those of the muses, who alone have exercised the right of honoring his memory.

In the neighbourhood of Itri the road becomes circuitous, and we were two hours in going through the windings of several valleys. They are connected by the course of rivulets, and by woods of Lexes. Near the sea coast we discovered some solitary rocks, on which is built the citadel of Gaeta. At the foot of these ramparts begins a plain, which is watered by the Garigliano, washed by the sea and adjoining Capua. A pleasant and fertile plain, where Cicero was born, and where he died, and which the Italians still call Campania Felice.

Fields, indeed, happy, if happiness consist in a simple life, in which man derives more enjoyment from his senses than from his reflections; if

happiness consist in a life, in which surrendering himself to the fugitive impressions of external objects, man sees, on the earth, only images, and finds in his heart only instincts: fields, indeed, happy, if happiness be found in that easy existence, in which man never struggles with himself, and remains, equally, a stranger to disappointments and the feelings of glory: a childish existence, in which he obtains, with the same facility, the gifts of nature and the happiness derived from the accomplishment of his wishes: delicious fields! destined, by heaven, to gratify the imagination, and to be the residence of those who speak only its language.

We arrived at Capua after having passed this prairie; the sight of these fields, and the recollections attached to their name, led us to expect, in approaching this city, that we should find scenes still more rural and more beautiful. But this slight intoxication was dissipated on arriving at the gates of Capua; we saw only bastions and fosses; the city is a mere fortress, and its approach defended by sentinels.

LETTER XV.

NAPLES, JULY 26, 1813.

Sir,

We excuse the indolence and thoughtlessness of the inhabitants of Naples, when we pass over their neighbouring plains. As, in the islands lately discovered in the middle of the seas which separate America from Asia, nature has collected round Naples every thing which, without effort, can support life, and charm its short duration. This life, so frequently wretched, is there exempt from care, Providence alone supplying all its wants. The sun, by warming the earth and atmosphere, ripens the fruit; the sea, every evening, wafts to the shore a refreshing breeze, the tribute of its waves, to temper the heat of the day, and mix the pure and vital air of the north with the warm air of noon. The mountains, charged with vapors, produce numerous streams, which run down and meander in the plains, watering the green turf. The banks on the shore, by taking a curve, have produced a gulf and two promontories, as if

intended as barriers against storms; and the hills which bound the horizon, exhibit, in their vast extent, an assemblage of all the forms with which nature decorates herself.

Even the city of Naples, situated at the extremity of the gulf, seems a decoration added to the richness of this amphitheatre, to be one of its varieties, and to unite a great scene of agitation with the imposing calm of the sea and its shores.

The promontory, seen to the north of the bay of Naples, has always borne the name given to it by Æneas, and fulfilling the prediction of Virgil, it is still called the cape of Misene. There is an easy landing from the sea, but the road to it has been suffered to fall into decay; carriages go no further than Pouzzoli; the other part of the road, formed along the shore towards the ruins of Baiea, goes over rocks which can be passed only on horseback, or on foot.

I preferred going round the gulf in the latter way, expecting thus to follow all its contours, and, uninterruptedly to enjoy the impressions excited in this spot, embellished by nature, by time, and by poetry.

I left Naples at break of day; I was guided in my route only by my former recollection, and I arrived, without difficulty, at the entrance of Pausilippo. In this long subterranean passage I found a sepulchral darkness, and in passing through it

I experienced a painful sensation, for this deep avenue, the noble work of the Romans, though it has nothing in it mysterious, impresses the imagination very gloomily.

I returned to the light with a feeling of pleasure, and left the great road to avoid the dust. It was not, however, yet very troublesome, as a heavy dew had moistened it. These drops of moisture, precipitated by the coolness of the night, fell on the plants and refreshed them. The sun was not sufficiently high to produce its evaporation, and the projected shadows still preserved the morning tints on the grassy banks.

In these fields the productions of the earth grow under the shade of elms. They are large enough to admit vines growing upon their branches, and to pass from tree to tree, so as to produce many rows of garlands, laden with bunches of grapes hanging one above another.

Under this shade I noticed some young bean plants, growing very vigorously, and which were sown after harvest; this nascent vegetation reminded me of the spring in my own country. Further off rose the stems of maize; a purple tint shewed their approaching maturity. In an adjoining field long rows of melons diffused their perfume through the air. Thickets of fig trees, of peaches, and aloes, grew spontaneously on the borders of the fields, and seemed kindly to offer

their fruits to the laborers. I stopped to contemplate this rural scene, and perceived some village girls coming towards me; they were called to their work in the fields by the sound of the tambourine; they took hold of each other's hands, and danced as they followed in the path I had taken.

I could have wished to have given these young women of the south, the dress and healthy appearance of the paysannes of Florence, for they resembled the Tuscan girls only in their gaiety and negligence: nature, in bestowing upon the Neapolitan women so many means of happiness, has denied them the power of pleasing by natural gracefulness and an attractive bloom. Their physiognomy is harsh, their complexion olive; and nothing pleases in them, except it be the wonderful instinct by which they discover the secret harmony existing between movements, sounds, and thoughts.

I wandered a long while in this place, for I had left the road and was in no haste to regain it, so much was I pleased thus to stroll under the light shade, where chance led the way. I continued my walk, directed by the shadow, for in these fields, planted with elms, the horizon is excluded.

I met some laborers, and they shewed me the way. I took this opportunity of questioning them concerning their rural labor. They told me that the estate on which we were, belonged, before the revolution, to a convent of Camaldules, but that it

had been since purchased by some speculators, without this change of proprietors having made any alteration in the system of farming it. These villagers were the metayers of it; each of them cultivated a portion, and the most intelligent explained, in the following terms, the rural economy of this land of ashes, in the environs of Naples.

"We, poor metayers, he said, occupy only so much land as we can cultivate by our own families, that is to say, four or five acres. Our condition is not a good one, since we get, for our trouble, only a third of the produce, two-thirds belonging to the owner, which we pay, in kind, into the hands of the steward. We have no ploughs, and the whole is cultivated by the spade. It is true that the soil, being mixed with ashes, is easily stirred; and even our children assist us in this work. At times the mountain, hence named Vesuvius, pours forth showers of ashes, which spread over our fields and fertilize them."

"The trees which you see on the land, are not without their use; they support the vine, and give us fruit; we also carefully gather their leaves, it is the last autumnal crop, and serves to feed our cattle in the winter. We cultivate, in succession, melons between the rows of elms, which we carry to the city to sell; after which we sow wheat. When the wheat crop is taken off, we dig in the stubble, which is done by our families, to sow beans or purple

clover. During six months our children go every morning to cut a quantity of it, with the sickle, to feed the cows. We prefer the females of the buffalos, as they give most milk. We have, also, goats, and sometimes an ass or a small horse to go to the city and carry our burdens; but this advantage belongs only to the richer metayers."

"We plant the maize the following spring, after clover or beans. We manure the land at this time, because this plant is to support our families; this crop, therefore, interests us more than all the others, and the day in which it is harvested is a day of festivity in our country. All the villagers assemble together, the young women dance, and the rest of us walk slowly, being laden with our tools. Arrived at our dwellings, each family goes into its own; but they are so near each other that we can still converse together."

"We often gather seven ears from one stalk of maize, and many of them are three palms long. When the sun is high, the father of the family goes into the adjoining field to get some melons, while the children gather fruit from the surrounding fig trees. The fruit is brought under an elm tree, round which the whole family sits; after this repast the work begins again, and does not cease until the close of day. Each family then visits its neighbours, and tells of the rich crop the season has bestowed upon them."

"We have no sooner gotten in the maize than the earth is again dug, to be sown once more with wheat; after this second crop we grow, in the fields, only vegetables of different kinds. Our lands thus produce wine and fruit, corn and vegetables, leaves and grass for the cattle. We have no reason to complain of their fertility, but our conditions are hard, little being left for our pains; and if the season is not propitious, the metayer has much to complain of."

Thus I heard complaints in the midst of the richest country in Europe, and every thing convinced me that they were well founded. Wretchedness is, every where, the constant companion of a rich soil; it so much attracts and increases population, that the land, indefinitely subdivided, soon ceases to be able alone to support the numbers it has too much multiplied.

From the details given me by this good metayer, I learned that there was a regular system of husbandry in the volcanic land, which surrounds Vesuvius, and I believe the regular course is as follows:

First year.....Maize—manured.
Second.....Wheat.
Third.....Onions and legumes.
Fourth.....Wheat, followed by beans or wild clover.
Fifth.....Melons.

Five years and six crops, of which four are leguminous and two are corn, besides the produce of vines, fruits, and leaves, which grow on the same land. This culture is almost wholly directed to the sustenance of man; the sixth crop only, and which a happy climate allows to be stolen from the seasons, is reserved for animals. The variety of vegetables, judiciously intermixed in this system, keeps up the fertility of the soil, with but little manure; it must, at the same time, be observed, that in placing a volcano near these fields, nature has given them a perpetual source of fertility.

It is evident, that a family of five persons is here maintained on the third of the produce of five acres. They live, certainly, with great economy, and consume less wheat than vegetables and fruit; but still they live and prosper. I should think there cannot be found, except in India, an instance of such richness of soil, and of so great a population; for within the circuit which Vesuvius fertilizes with its ashes, it amounts to five thousand souls per square league.

I at length quitted my villagers, wishing them happy days and good crops, and immediately left these fields of elms. The horizon again opened before me, when I had ascended a little hill of rocks; it commanded the sea, and the view thence comprehended the whole gulf. On my right, below these rocks, I saw the city of Pouzzoli, further

on, the smoke of the Solfaterra, the hills of Averno, the ruins of Baiea, and the promontory of Misene.

The shore round the gulf has been destroyed by time and volcanos; nothing remaining but rocks and rubbish. Productive nature has clothed them with wild plants, among which may be recognized some scattered shoots of shrubs, which, two thousand years ago, decorated the gardens of Campania.

I passed the heat of the day at Pouzzoli, a city composed of huts and ruins, and I engaged a lodging for the following night. At the approach of evening I stopped at the edge of the shore, near the ruins of the temple of Serapis, and I could see, under the water, the remains of the causeway, which Domitian intended, by an easy communication, to have united the two arms of the gulf. I continued my course. A foot-path, traced on the sand, led me along the shore. The cigales* beat their wings, and the waves, driven by a light breeze, one after the other, died on the shore. I wished to go to the lake Averno; I was obliged to pass the first chain of hills before I could discover it. I went up a stony path, upon a rude hill. It was covered with shrubs, which were in flower, and diffused around their perfumes. From the top of

* A species of grasshopper, the cicada of the ancients, which, in Italy and the south of France, in the summer, make a peculiar and frequently an incessant noise, by shaking their wings.—*T.*

this hill I saw, at the bottom of a circular valley, a still water and a deep solitude. I stopped to enjoy the view. The setting sun still gilded the eastern side of the lake, but its opposite bank was already in the shade. Notwithstanding the beauty of the evening, I neither, as in the time of Virgil, heard the singing of birds nor the sound of the cigales; on the circumference of the lake there is neither habitation nor culture; it is abandoned, like a desert, to the memory and the imagination; but this sensible faculty of our being enjoys itself in this solitude, for the stillness of the water and the silence of the woods leave it to itself, and interrupt not its reverie.

I could not quit the borders of this lake, but remained there until it was night. In my return I had only the light of one of those eastern nights which the sky and the earth contribute to embellish. The transparency of the atmosphere, without clouds, allowed the firmament to display all its brilliancy. Every plant exhaled its perfume, the buds expanded themselves, the insects were in motion, every being breathed, and life, instead of being extinguished at the approach of night, seemed renascent, in order to enjoy, with pleasing intoxication, the bliss denied by the light of day.

I came, the following morning, without stopping, near the entrance of the grotto where the Sybil of Cuma delivered her oracles. In approaching these

rocks, I expected to see the scene described by Virgil; I there sought for this

Horrendæ procul secreta Sibillæ
Antrum immane;

but I saw nothing great, secret, or frightful. The guide who accompanied me lighted his flambeau, and went with me into a subterranean gallery, carefully cut out of the solid rock. On the sides of this gallery were several passages, skilfully formed, through which we went into rooms still decorated with elegant sculptures. Time, as yet, has had no influence on this work; it is destitute of the august character which it alone impresses on its productions. One would not have imagined such a place to have been the abode of prophets, or that such grottos were designed for the delivery of oracles. It would seem that, in this country of prodigies, there might have been selected, for this purpose, antique caverns, more religious by their gloom, and more sombre by their want of order.

One would have been disposed to think, from observing the minute art with which the ancients constructed their houses and their temples, that being less removed than we are, from the period of wild and primitive nature, they most valued those works which marked the progress of civilization; while in our days, weary, in some sort, of the perpetual repetition of the works of art, we,

on the contrary, like to see them superseded, and to find some traces of the original forms of the creation.

On advancing towards the side of Misene, we see ruins, some of which still present a semblance of their ancient beauty, but the greater parts are sunk below the water. Probably, in no place is the destructive hand of time more deeply marked than in these places, formerly so celebrated. The shores of Baiea, and the ruins with which they are covered, seem, no longer, susceptible of restoration, so as again to form a part of the scenery of the world. There is only one way of getting to it, which is by passing over rocks. It is true that above these rocks, nature presents a very different aspect. The renovated earth extends in smooth, but unequal declivities, over which pass small streams. The meadows, watered by these streams, acquire fresh verdure every morning; aloes and oranges grow scattered on their turf. Some cottages are dispersed among these thickets; children collect the oranges, or gather the flowers. If the heat of noon become oppressive, subterranean grottos invite into their cool recesses: they admit only a feeble light; the water falls, in different parts, in sheets and cascades, and preserves an equal temperature in the grottos. The darkness of these vaults, and the sound of the waters, compose the imagination which has been excited by

so many scenes and recollections, and we return with renewed curiosity to visit the shores and the ruins.

The appearance of these places so boasted of by the ancients, surprizes, at this time, by the disproportion of their extent, to the distinction they obtained in the prosperous days of Rome. In reading the history of that period, one would suppose that the shores of Baiea must have included a vast territory, to have been the residence of all those Romans who had such pleasure in passing their time there. But in going over these ruins, we are astonished how little space the ancients allotted to the comfort of their habitations; they lived almost, constantly, in the open air, or in their gardens, but even these gardens were only parterres, decorated with great care and remarkably confined. The entire space formerly occupied by the whole country of Baiea, might be included in a moderate sized park of England or France.

Our imagination is so accustomed to consider every thing belonging to the Romans as something colossal, that it remains confounded at the diminutiveness, not to say meanness of the vestiges which time has left of them: we must have seen them to believe it, such is our incredulity. The genius of the Romans is not displayed in their civil and religious buildings, they are symmetrically designed and finished with great art; but magnificence is seen only in their aqueducts and amphitheatres.

The Romans had so little taste for the gigantic in architecture, that all the temples of ancient Rome do not equal, in mass, the single church of St. Peter. The Appian way was only nine feet wide; it was in the decoration, and not in the size of their houses, that the ancients displayed their vanity.

I wished, before I returned, to go to the extremity of the promontory, to see, at one view, the most beautiful prospect in the world. I was at Misene, between Averno and the Elysian fields, near the ruins of Baiea and the tombs of the Romans; I saw, from the summits of these rocks, vessels under a favorable breeze, steering towards the road of Naples. Boats, without number, furrowed the gulf, and the setting sun seemed to stretch out sheets of gold across the heavens, while the fatigued earth prepared itself, by a perfect calm, for the mysteries of the night.

After having indulged, in two days, all the sensations excited in me by these scenes, I embarked for Naples, and I made this passage, accompanied by the songs of the sailors, and in the most beautiful evening I recollect ever to have seen.

ETTER XVI.

PORTICI, AUGUST 2. 1813.

Sir,

I AM returned from an excursion to Vesuvius. This mountain has been so often described, that it may appear to you unnecessary to say any thing more of it. The eruption of the volcano is, however, so grand a natural phænomenon, that I shall, probably, not weary your curiosity, by endeavoring to give you a sketch of it, as correctly as I can.

It is a long time since this scene of horror was renewed: as if the earth, weary of the political storms which agitated its surface, thought it superfluous to disturb its interior with convulsions. But having been at Naples during the eruption of 1791, I have found my account of it, in the journal which I wrote at that time, and I shall transcribe it in this letter, as it appears to be not without interest.

I was preparing to quit Naples, in order to be at Rome during the Easter holidays; it was in the month of March, 1791. It was eleven o'clock at night; I had just returned to the hotel de Venise,

where I lodged, when the people of the house came to my room to inform me that Vesuvius had just began to throw out clouds of ashes, and that the flames announced an approaching eruption, The air was as hot as in the month of July, and as calm as in a beautiful summer's day.

I soon ascended a terrace on the house; the atmosphere was thickened by a shower of ashes; we felt them as they fell, but we could not see them. They came down slowly and imperceptibly, and by degrees accumulated on the ground; they deadened the sound of the carriages, and spread over the country a dull tint, as if it were clothed in mourning.

We, however, perceived the flames in the dark; they came from the crater, and appeared in long flashes: all at once a luminous point shone on the side of the mountain, about a hundred toises below the top: it was a new crater which the lava had opened. I immediately heard a general cry through the city, "See the lava, see the new crater, it is opened on this side, and may God and St Januarius come to our assistance! Let us run to implore their protection!" The churches, as if by common consent, opened at once; all the bells rang, and the whole population of Naples came into the streets and squares; I went also to the mole, to mix with the people and participate in their alarm and curiosity.

This spectacle, grand as it was, had by no means the character of a festival, for the looks of every one expressed inquietude, and were directed towards the luminous spot, which was seen enlarging every instant. The priests were already assembled near the altars, and the faithful pressed around them. The crowd entered the churches from devotion, and went out again through fear. They waited impatiently for the setting out of the processions, on which they rested their security. Banners were displayed, and with religious songs, they soon after began to leave the churches. The sound of their approach drove the people away, but as they advanced, they who were passing in the streets followed them; even ladies came out of their carriages, and walked in the ashes with the faithful. The processions arrived, through different streets, at the great square of the palace; the King and royal family were on the balcony; the people, as they passed, saluted them with shouts. The processions met in this immense square; they crossed each other, went backwards and forwards, and incessantly increased in numbers, until overpowered by alarm, they determined to return, by a circuitous route, to the churches whence they came.

The clouds of ashes were dissipated about day break, and the first rays of light diminished the brightness of the fires which had shone during the night. The people suddenly took courage, and

thought heaven was appeased, because they saw the morning's dawn. They forgot the great night-scene they had just witnessed, nor did they think of its being repeated the same evening.

I also retired, for the spectacle of a volcano is most striking in the dark, and I wished to have a nearer view of it the following night.

I, therefore, set out for Vesuvius about seven in the evening. I went with a young Livonian, whose name I cannot recollect. As the day declined, the flames from the volcano appeared brighter, and on arriving at Portici we could distinguish how far the lava had advanced during the day. It was no longer, as the evening before, a luminous point, but a wide river, slowly moving and forming its own path.

We left the chaise at Portici, and there took our guides. They brought us mules to ride on, and flambeaux to give us light, but there was little occasion for them, as the flames of the volcano sufficiently illuminated the whole horizon.

We ascended towards the hermitage of St. Salvador, in the midst of vineyards, in a difficult road, full of stones and cinders; our mules, accustomed to the road, went easily up, and we could survey, without obstacle, the grand scene before us.

We thus arrived at St. Salvador. Two hermits, at this time, inhabited it, one a Genoese and the other a Parisian; they lived in two different cells,

for they had quarrelled, and, for several years, had not spoken to each other. We were received by the Parisian; he gave us some dates and oranges; the eruption was a holiday to him; not that the phænomenon excited his curiosity, but because so many strangers came to his cell and afforded him frequent opportunities of conversation.

The mules returned to Portici, as they could no longer be of use to us. Two guides only remained with us, to direct us to that part of the mountain where the lava had taken its course. Before we came again to this road, we sat some time before the hermitage, occupied in looking at the sheets of fire which the volcano threw around. Having continued our route, we endeavored to come near the torrent of lava, whose direction already threatened the unfortunate city of Torre del Greco; but it escaped at that time, and was not destroyed until three years after.

We walked on the ashes and scoriæ in paths but little tracked; they led us across a wide valley, which separates the hermitage from the higher part of Vesuvius. This valley, without grass or shrubs, extended to the east of the mountain, on the opposite side of the eruption. It was, also, gloomy and tranquil, and had only the pale light reflected by the clouds. It was the valley of the dead, and the abode of eternal silence. It had been traversed only during this night, by caravans

of travellers, attracted by curiosity, and who passed backwards and forwards from the hermitage to the crater. Flambeaux shewed them the way, and they saluted each other as they passed. We scarcely knew in what language to give the first salutation, for we did not know to what nations the caravans belonged. In this uncertainty we addressed first in French. What was it that determined this preference? On the sides of Vesuvius, in the middle of the night, three hundred leagues from France, strangers made use of its language to wish each other a good journey. What greater homage was ever paid to the influence of her genius! for at this time, it was not the superiority of her warriors that gave a value to this trophy.

After walking an hour, we began, with some difficulty, to climb over heaps of scoriæ. We were obliged to search our way in passages unknown to our guides, for at each eruption the lava takes a new course. We soon came to a part which was destroyed by the fire, and in which every thing bore the marks of it. The air began to be hot, even the stones were warm; we saw purple clouds pass over our heads, and mark a bloody track in the heavens.

We were not more than half a mile from the end of our journey when we met a female, who remained with two guides, only, on the mountain. She was wrapped in a shawl, and was seated on a

rock. She spoke to the guides very earnestly: from her accent I supposed her to be an English woman, and went to her, and offered my assistance, requesting to know the cause of her emotion. She answered me in French, with an eloquence produced by the state of darkness and the derangement of the elements. She said she had reached this spot, accompanied by her husband, and a caravan filled by her countrymen; but she added, that when arrived at this place, the guides persuaded her husband that the rest of the way would be too dangerous for her. She had made fruitless efforts to induce him to allow her to compleat the journey, but the caravan went without her, in spite of her prayers and tears, and she was left to the care of the two guides. She used all her influence with the guides to induce them to go with her, but they refused, and no more hope remaining, she was almost in a state of despair, for she wished, on any terms, to see the phænomenon, for which she had waited with so much anxiety.

I ventured to offer her my assistance, and the support of my arm, in the short track which now remained for us to go. She accepted it with a confidence which, perhaps, a little surprized me, though she had no other motive than that of witnessing the magnificent scene which Vesuvius now exhibited. We got into the road, notwithstanding the protestations of the guides.

I assisted her in walking; she took hold of my arm; we advanced but slowly, because we sank in the ashes, and the scoriæ bruised her feet. We, however, approached the torrent of lava; it gave us light, and I could see my companion. She was young and handsome; she was pale from emotion, and seemed, by her enthusiasm, to partake of the agitation of nature.

The earth and the atmosphere became hotter as we approached the source of the light, and this circumstance had something frightful in it: clouds of smoke passed before us, we endeavored to avoid them by placing ourselves out of the direction of the wind, but the storm was so violent that we were twice enveloped in burning clouds, and escaped perishing in them. The soil gave way under our feet, and the fire, concealed under the scoriæ, shewed itself as our feet pushed them down the precipitous slope of the mountain.

We attained, not without difficulty, the end of our journey; the friends of my young companion had already arrived there, but they were so much occupied with the spectacle before them, that they had not observed our approach. We, however, went to them, and I was not without apprehension that they would reproach us; but our enterprize had succeeded, and success justifies every thing; they pardoned our indiscretion, and nothing interrupted our enjoying, in silence, the grandeur of the scene before us.

Her husband called her Florinda; I heard no other name. Twenty-two years have passed since. Perhaps Florinda may read these letters, she will, then, recollect the mountain, the night, and the stranger who guided her steps to that sea of fire.

We, all together, observed the burning stream, whose waves passed before us. They did not flow as in a common river, but rolled over each other, like broken rocks. Its current was continually spreading; because, by degrees, it rekindled the old scoriæ; and the mountain seemed, then, to be wholly on fire.

The torrent was already some hundred feet wide, and its dreadful march was directed to a precipice; it would, probably, fall into this gulf before day-break, and we were desirous of waiting to see it. We measured with the eye the space it had yet to pass over. It moved slowly, but without stopping; the scoriæ taking fire at its approach, prepared its way. The torrents of fire, at length, reached the edge of the rocks, and they rolled down with a terrifying sound.

Volumes of smoke arose from this abyss; the wind blew from every quarter, and drove it about in the air, while the lava accumulated in the gulf, and filled it with its wreck.

This natural reservoir checked the violence of the current, and saved the dwellings, which were menaced before; it would have required several

days to fill it with the lava, and the eruption ceased before that fatal period. Three years after, the lava did not experience the same obstacles; it ran towards the sea, and compleatly destroyed the city of Torre del Greco.

Day-break appeared in the horizon; by a sweet magic, the brightness of the night was dissipated, vanishing before the light of day. The fire grew pale, the vapors became whiter, and there remained nothing before our eyes, but the singular appearance of a mountain moving without effort, and rolling over itself.

It was time to depart, for, concealed by the strong light of the sun, the fire becomes dangerous; a person may be destroyed by it, before he is aware of approaching it. We went back the same way, returned to St. Salvador, and thence to Portici.—The carriages waited for us there; it was, there, I took leave of Florinda, and I have never seen her since.

LETTER XVII.

ROME, SEPTEMBER 10, 1818.

Sir,

You once told me, that the Swiss shepherds, whom you sent to your estate, in the Crimea, to undertake the care of your cattle, were almost all returned, after having resided some time in that distant country. You added, that they had given no other reason for their premature return, than that they were low spirited, in consequence of there being no trees in those Tartarian mountains. But for that, they said, they should have remained there; as in all other respects, their lives passed very comfortably.

The imagination, then, exerts a secret influence, even on men who would seem to be only occupied with the care of providing for their existence. In travelling, I have endeavored to convince myself of this influence, which may be extended much beyond the limits assigned to it, because it acts upon us, without impediment, and without our being conscious of it. There are a thousand

inexplicable dispositions of our being, which, probably, depend upon this mysterious influence, which nature, imperceptibly, spreads over us.

We discover, however, but slight marks of this sensibility in the inhabitants of the country, because habit has the greatest influence over them; and I never recognized impressions produced by rural scenery, but on shepherds who have the care of wandering flocks. This class of men lead a quiet and contemplative life, in which all the operations of nature acquire an importance. They have time to observe them, and it is necessary to foresee them, that they may guard against them. They live almost alone, surrounded with natural objects, from which they acquire a language and emotions, which they could not have derived from society. Thus, we almost always find, under the rude exterior of vagrant shepherds, an intelligence, and a sort of indifference to the things of this life, the originality of which has always much impressed me.

It is difficult, however, not to believe, that laborers are, more or less, sensible to the beauty of the fields they cultivate. It may, indeed, not be perceptible, but it does not the less influence their character. If there be any truth in this opinion, the Neapolitan villagers ought, more than any others, to be sensible of the kindness of Providence towards them; for they live in the most beautiful

country in the world; its fertility lessens the laborer's exertions, and sweetens his life, while the vicinity of the mountains, the sea, and the valleys, offer to the view the varied forms of the beauties of this world.

The further we proceed to the south, the more we find the richness and magnificence of this country, which the volcanos, alternately, destroy and renovate. I was not, therefore, disposed to return, at once, to Rome, by the same road, the scenery of which I have already described to you; I wished to penetrate a little further into the kingdom of Naples, to enjoy its oriental temperature, and the view of its noble and wild scenery.

I took, at Naples, one of the light carriages of that country, made to go on roads but little tracked, and I set off before the plan of my journey was perfectly arranged. The heat of summer began to decline, the nights were longer, and abundant showers had cooled the air and laid the dust; I could not have chosen a more delightful season.

I took the road to Portici, and I did not stop, until I arrived at Pompeia, where I spent the remainder of the day. I will not repeat to you what has been so well said, on the unexpected impressions produced on seeing these beautiful remains of antiquity. The ashes have kept them in perfect preservation, and they appeared to want only inhabitants. I shall merely add, that, within

the last four years, the digging has been much extended. They have discovered an entire new quarter, the buildings in which being much ornamented, indicate the residence of richer proprietors than those of the houses previously discovered. They have found a second gate of the city. With a few years more labor, Pompeia will rise completely from the tomb, in which it has been buried so many ages.

There are no ruins in Italy, nor, probably, in the world, which excite so much interest as those of Pompeia, for there is nothing conjectural in what we see there: the imagination has nothing to fill up, and nothing to suppose. Every thing remains there as the Romans left it; every thing indicates their habits. We live with them, we use their furniture, we eat at their tables, we view their drawings, we read their manuscripts. The time which has lapsed since the day when Pliny met his death there, seems to be lost, and it might have been yesterday.

I remained a long while looking at the workmen, who were digging. They had just gotten into the inside of a house, and every stroke of the spade made a discovery. I know nothing likely to excite so lively an interest, as the digging in such a celebrated spot. Expectation and curiosity equally affect us. The imagination is excited by the historical recollections, at this instant, called

forth. The eyes are involuntarily fixed on the trowel with which the workman cautiously removes the ashes, for fear of breaking the articles which he may chance to expose.

I was immoveably fixed near these laborers, they threw shovels full of ashes into wheel barrows. They discovered a wall; it was painted in fresco, beautiful arabesques gradually appeared. May not these medallions explain some of the secrets of antiquity? But our expectation, in this instance, was disappointed; they represented only bacchants and cupids.

The work went on; in emptying a room of the ashes with which it was filled, we came to the lower part of it, and the precautions were increased, as they expected to find furniture and some valuable articles. The trowel touched a hard and resisting body. The workman removed the ashes very slowly, and he perceived a bronze ornament. Beautiful carved leaves rose from the ground; they adhered to branches, having fruit upon them, which were oranges. The stem of the tree rested in a vase of the same metal; it served as a pedestal: this bronze, of an elegant form, was only a candelabra, in the fruit of which were inserted sockets, which diffused around the light of twenty lamps. Art has produced nothing more natural, or more graceful, than this candelabra, whose reappearance I witnessed after two thousand years,

as clean and as polished as when it first came out of the hands of the workmen.

On the side of this bronze, and on the same pedestal, was a bust of Marius; I was gratified at being present at discoveries of so much interest; but night put a stop to the work; the workmen, as well as the antiquarians, went away, and I followed them with regret. In this short time I could not help thinking, how one might pass a whole life in these places, without experiencing a moment's fatigue or ennui.

The following morning I continued to follow the windings of the gulf, in my way to the promontory of Sorrento. As I withdrew from Vesuvius, and its base covered with scoriæ, I came into a beautiful region of land, enriched by ashes. The road was bordered with houses, most of which were inhabited by the rich Neapolitans, as pleasure houses. Art had decorated them; they were almost all painted in fresco, and ornamentod with statues after the antique. The roofs, surrounded with balustrades, were covered with shrubs, where, in these aerial groves, the inhabitants enjoyed the cool of the evening and the beauty of the scenery. Around these pavillions we noticed gardens, not large, but embellished by the skill of the gardener. On the pilasters of the portals were some large aloes, in vases cut out of blocks of lava. Every thing in these abodes shewed the exquisite taste of

the ancients. I felt a charm at the sight of these well arranged houses; for there is a sort of beauty in blending the regular works of art with those of nature in wild and fertile countries.

I arrived at Castellamare, after having passed through its rich and populous neighbourhood. The volcanos seem to have spared this eastern side of the Bay of Naples, as it were, to reserve for its inhabitants, country houses, and a delightful residence. For beyond Pompeia, we no longer see, in the fields, any traces of the destruction caused by Vesuvius. Nature is there young and vigorous. The land stretches along the shore, in gentle slopes, on which grow, together, olive and mulberry trees, the vine, and orange trees. This land, so favored by heaven, comprehends the whole space between Sorrento and Salerno, and is known by the name of Piave de Sorrento.

The plain of Sorrento is almost the only part of the kingdom of Naples, in which can be seen the effects of an active and well-directed industry. It is also in this beautiful country that the villagers have successfully introduced the culture of cotton; a culture which the usages of society have rendered so necessary. It had been, before, adopted at Naples; but, until within a few years, it was sown only on small spots, for a local and limited consumption. The continental system, having raised the value of this plant, a larger space was allotted

to its cultivation; and the farmers, in this country, profiting by the natural advantages of their climate, furnished, in the year 1812, nearly sixty thousand bales of cotton to the manufactures of Europe.

The land which I have just seen, promises, this year, an abundant crop, which will enrich some families, who little expected, in this world, any more than a moderate existence. This consideration added much to the interest I felt in visiting this country.

I learned the method of cultivating the cotton, on a large scale, adopted by the metayers of Piave de Sorrento, and the way in which it has been introduced into their regular course of husbandry.

The land is turned over, by the spade, in the month of March, and the seeds are sown in lines, at three feet distant; the plants, in the lines, are two feet asunder. The earth is so rich as to require no manure, but only to be constantly kept clean; women are, therefore, employed, during the whole season, in weeding the fields of cotton. As soon as the flowering is over, and the well-formed capsules require only the sun to ripen them, the ends of the branches are nipped off, thus determining all the sap to the fruit.

The harvest lasts a long while, and consists in collecting the capsules as they ripen. It is then only requisite to clear the cotton, by separating it from the seeds. This operation is long and tedious,

They were endeavouring to make machines to simplify the process; but I have not learned whether they have succeeded.

The course of husbandry adopted in the land which has been covered with volcanic ashes, and of which I gave you an account in a preceding letter, left no room for the cultivation of cotton. It could not be admitted without changing the established course; the succession of crops which I am going to describe, is the result. It merits attention, because it is, probably, the best arranged and the most productive of any in the world.

None of the crops, which, in the old system of the country, were immediately necessary for the farmer's subsistence, could be dispensed with. They, therefore, continued to begin with the culture of maize, for which the land is manured. Wheat follows it; beans are then sown immediately after harvest. This crop being intended to feed cattle during the winter, is taken up sufficiently early to admit of the land being prepared to receive the cotton seeds by the end of March; after this is harvested, wheat is again sown the same autumn, to which succeeds the purple clover. Melons are grown after the clover, and legumes, planted as soon as the melon crop is taken off, occupy the ground until the spring, and finish the course. It is as follows:

First year....Maize—manured.
Second.....Wheat, followed by beans.
Third.....Cotton.
Fourth.....Wheat, followed by wild clover.
Fifth.....Melons, followed by legumes.
Five years—eight crops.

This course, thus, furnishes eight crops in five years, two of which are corn, three are leguminous, one is commercial, and two are for the support of animals. It is impossible to arrange these different crops in a better way. The nature of their growth, and the different culture they require, alternately rest and prepare the soil, whose fertility is kept up by this variety, producing the utmost which can be rendered by nature to human industry.

This system appeared to me so well conducted, that I think it probable the cultivation of cotton will not cease at Naples, even after the peace, for it is there so well established, and so economically conducted, that I believe it capable of competing with that of America. The colonial cultivation is, hitherto, so little understood, and so much in its infancy, that little as the climate favors the Europeans, they have the advantage over the colonists, whose system exhausts the soil by a repetition of the same crops, without any restorative process.

The great value of the cotton produced in the small territory of Sorrento, makes me remark how

small a space would be requisite to supply all Europe with the commercial productions it stands in need of, if they were exclusively cultivated. In moderate soils, and in the system of fallows, the greater part of the crops is absorbed in the local consumption, a very small part only going to market. Thus the culture of these lands returns, perpetually, on itself. It produces a revenue always similar, and always limited; and as it yields to industry but a small portion of its productions, it supports little, and never increases the national prosperity. Every thing remains stationary in a country where fallows are used.

One is surprized, on the contrary, at the enormous commercial value which is, annually, created on a limited soil, the skilful and active culture of which exceeds, in its production, the demands of the local consumption; thus furnishing a large surplus to exterior commerce. It suddenly creates around these countries an activity and a mass of exchanges which rapidly promote the public prosperity.

It is thus that a moderate part of St. Domingo formerly produced sugar enough for the consumption of half Europe. A small marsh, when drained, alone produced the valuable flax which enriches Belgium. A narrow valley, between two mountains covered with pines, possesses the only manufacture of the Gruyere cheeses; the exportation

of which extends as far as the Indies. And I am convinced, that the kingdom of Naples could easily produce, without lessening its own consumption, the greater part of the cotton wanted in Europe.

The plain of Sorrento, bounded by the sea as a peninsula, terminates at Salerno; and at a little distance beyond that city, we already enter a maremme, that is to say, a country of pestilential air. The kingdom of Naples is not quite free from this scourge. It shews itself in all countries similarly situated, on the borders of the Mediterranean, but never on those of the Adriatic.

The unhealthy countries discover themselves by the absence of cultivation and that of village population. Property is, there, divided into large domains, which have the appearance of deserts. From the first entrance, the roads are lost in the grass, and we see but slight traces of them, scarcely sufficient to direct the travellers.

Ilexes, aloes, and cypresses, grow scattered about in the herbage of this maremme; for the soil, as we approach the south, becomes richer, and the vegetation more vigorous. Some ruins, half Roman and half Gothic, are seen at certain distances, surrounded with fig trees; near them are, sometimes, seen shepherds, armed with lances, watching the movements of their flocks. They are often, also, seen passing out of sight, on swift horses, at full speed, as if they were avoiding some

danger. The flocks committed to their care, wander about as wild as their shepherds. These fierce animals look with a stupid astonishment at all the new objects which chance brings into their domain. Accustomed to these plains, of which they are the sole inhabitants, they permit none to come and partake of the abode which Providence has destined for them.

The rude pastures of the Neapolitan Maremmes have not even a casale within their domains, as in the campagna of Rome; nor have they, as in that campagna, any ruins of old towns, still inhabited; nor do they, in short, retain a name which has the privilege of ennobling every thing. The shepherds have no other shelter in these deserts than reed huts, and the flocks, lying all around them, ruminate in peace, during the silence of the nights.

After travelling a long way in the maremmes, we discovered, on the confines of the horizon, some solitary buildings, but entire, and which time has respected. As we approached them, they seemed larger, and, at length, appeared immense. We, at last, discovered a colonade, very massive, and of a regular structure. These monuments projected from the azure sky, and their architecture could be distinguished at a considerable distance. They are the three temples of Paestum; and it is here travellers finish their journey.

Of all the ruins in Italy, these are the most

ancient, and the most striking. The times are unknown in which they were built, but they are called heroic, because it is easy to place heroes beyond the history of the human race. These temples have witnessed the long history of Rome; they have seen its termination, and seem destined to witness the last days of the world.

At what period of history, at what age of the world, shall we fix the epoch of the existence of those unknown, but astonishing nations who built, in Italy, Cyclopean walls, while in Africa they raised the pyramids of Gize and the avenue of the Sphinx? History is silent, and gives us no information respecting the miracles of that age, whose monuments confound our reason and almost our imagination, for they appear above human power. Nothing in nature has, to this day, explained the singular mysteries of this monumental civilization; a civilization so great as still to astonish the world by its ruins, so religious as to have raised colossi for the altars of its gods, and mountains for the tombs of its dead.

How is it that all the traces have been lost of that race of giants who had mammoths for their domestic animals, and who constructed their ramparts with rocks? The ruins which they have left us astonish us the more, because we cannot conceive that genius of the ages which presided at their birth. It is a world, the secret of which has

never reached us, and with respect to which we can do nothing, but remain mute before those august monuments, which time has preserved by placing them in wildernesses.

Nature, in our days, does not seem to have strength sufficient to destroy these ruins: they are so massive, and the earth has been so long accustomed to support them, that they seem even like a work of the Creation.

These enormous colonades, imperishable in the midst of solitudes and ages, appear destined only to see the seasons roll on, and to serve as a retreat for the animals on the plain, for they come to these temples to seek shelter during storms. An aged buffalo is often seen waiting the return of day behind a pillar, which, for twenty years, he has chosen as his resting place. The rest of the herd respect him as the master of the desert, and never dispute with him the place he has selected.

On resting near these ruins, we experience an emotion which I know not how to describe. We think we are viewing a scene where every thing passed in a world, and in an age, which are strangers to our time. Nothing, in the solitary scenes which surround these temples, destroys the illusion; and when we withdraw from this theatre of an unknown world, the illusion, for a long while, follows us, rendering, by comparison, every aspect of the world cold and diminutive.

The strong impression produced by contemplating the monuments of the heroic times, is quite different from that we experience in examining the ruins of the Roman civilization. The former astonish us by the total dissimilarity which they shew between their ages and ours, while the vestiges of the Romans exhibit an entire similarity between their manners and ours. There is a most perfect resemblance between them and us. The interests which agitated them are those which we still appreciate. The laws, the habits, all the springs which move men and societies, have remained common to us; and if we can dissemble, better than the Romans, the secret vanity which influences us, the reason is that time has taught us to be less ingenuous and less natural.

Before quitting the maremmes, I should have questioned the shepherds respecting their customs and economy, but any detail respecting their present life appeared insipid, after having directed my attention to that of such remote antiquity, and I passed over this solitude with no other reflections than those which related to ages, the history of which is lost in an eternal obscurity. I observed, en passant, some unknown plants, the flowers of which adorn these deserts, and I also noticed the flocks which inhabit them. The principal part of them was composed of buffalos, whose dull color saddened the fields. I could not help observing,

that of all the races of domestic animals, none would be so adapted to the colonies. They like hot climates and wet soils; they are good workers and quiet; and it is probable they would not degenerate in those countries as the other European races: they would also be very useful in the cultivation.

Further off I saw herds of oxen, of a breed different from the Hungarian; they were not grey, but of a bright yellow color; their horns were not very large, but gracefully turned, and their great height, joined to their beautiful shape, rendered them superb animals. From the descriptions I have read I should think this breed came from Africa.

There were also many horses in the meadows. Their figure was more noble and elegant than those of the other Italian breeds, but their heads were too long and too contracted. Their hair had shades of different singular colors. Their shapes and manners gave to these horses a great resemblance to those of Barbary; and the breed may be placed between that of Spain and Arabia.

The maremmes terminate near the Apennins. There nature seems to revive; the fields less cultivated, but nearly as fertile as those in the neighbourhood of Naples, are no longer embellished by the view of the sea; they are not enlivened, as in Tuscany and in Ombria, with a number of village

houses, scattered on the hills. Cultivation is there less perfect, and the dwellings are placed together in situations capable of defence. The most important article of culture, in the neighbouring Apennins, is the olive tree. These trees become superb in this volcanic soil, and give a rich perspective to the mountains.

I quitted the Naples road, after having gone beyond Salerno, and took the road to Nola, going to the east of Vesuvius. This passage was not practicable but in a light carriage. The country I went through was furrowed by the double action of water and the volcanos. It was uneven, well watered, and picturesque. The culture was productive with little labor. Fruit trees grew every where without having been planted. Streams murmured at the bottom of all the hollows, and made every valley a shady rural residence.

Beyond Nola the road became impassable for carriages; I was obliged to send mine back to Naples, and to continue the journey on horseback. I easily procured horses, and even very good ones; I agreed with the owners to go from stage to stage; they often accompanied me themselves to bring back the horses, and I was very glad thus to have guides in the country I passed through, because I obtained from them information respecting objects which excited my attention, and which, otherwise, I should not have acquired.

From Nola I went towards Alisi; I approached nearer the high chain of the Apennins; I saw it in the horizon, but I did not reach it, because I went in a direction nearly parallel to it. I passed from valley to valley; sometimes I went through wild straits, and sometimes climbed hills more or less steep. The roads were merely paths, but the country through which they led was delightful. I went at a venture, trusting to chance, which was almost always in my favor. I lodged with the curés of the towns where I stopped; formerly the convents received all travellers in these devious roads. The curés alone, at this time, exercise the duty of hospitality, and it is impossible to perform it with more kindness and simplicity. My guides did not doubt the reception I should meet with from them; they conducted me, as by right, to the door of the rectory, and desired me even to dismount before any of the people of the house made their appearance.

There is less danger from the attacks of banditti in these countries, than near the great roads. So few travellers pass this way they would lose their time in waiting for them. It has not, moreover, been the custom to attack and rob in this country; the same banditti whom it is so dangerous to meet near Terracino, here suffer the travellers, peaceably, to pursue their journeys, because, from their infancy, they have been accustomed to respect this

valley: every thing in the history of the human heart is opinion and habit.

The country continually presented to my view a succession of valleys and high grounds: the culture is there in little patches, and the land subdivided into small parcels. The soil and climate are both favorable to a variety of different productions. The olive tree, the vine, and the chesnut, grow here with great vigor, and group themselves on all the irregular spots of ground. It is cultivated with wheat, maize, beans, and vegetables, where the declivities are not too steep.

In the season I passed through this country, every part presented the appearance of richness. The plants, the shrubs, and trees, were equally laden with fruit, the size and color of which exhibited all sorts of tints and varieties. Some, by their farinaceous quality, supply, in poor families, the use of bread; others furnish oil, an article so much in demand by people in the east. Many others, which, in our climates, are mere ornaments in our gardens, are, here, used as food; and the frugal tables of the laborers are covered with these fruits, colored by the autumnal sun, whose tint and natural beauty art, in vain, endeavors to imitate in northern countries.

I, at length, again entered the state of the church, near Alatri. I had a wish to visit mount Cassino, as I passed, but this cradle of monastic institutions

was empty and deserted, and I was separated from it by difficult roads and uncultivated mountains. I found, in this part of the lands of the church, so little known, a country hilly and picturesque, but much less fertile than that of the state of Naples. The mountains are bare, and no longer covered by ashes; nor are there any large forests of chesnut trees. They are stunted, and only here and there scattered on the slope of the mountains; which they no longer cover with their protecting shade. The olive trees alone preserve their beauty, for they flourish in the half-broken rocks of these mountains. Numerous streamlets run down from the summits, though they appear arid. The steepness of the declivity accelerates their fall, and makes the water froth. The vines are not here tied in festoons to the elm trees, nor in lines near the ground, as near Albano, but supported on large trellises, formed of large branches. They thus grow twelve or fifteen feet high, and spread in bowers, from which the grapes are pendant. This shade is so thick that nothing vegetates under it; but the air is always temperate, and the long vine branches preserve the richest verdure during the summer.

The soil is so much injured in this region, that scarcely a spot remains for cultivation; small patches of land, in a favorable situation, and near a stream, serve for the cultivation of melons, maize

and vegetables. They are bordered by fig trees and aloes. The mountains produce no herbage, they present to the view only rocks, on which grow some odoriferous plants; sheep and a few goats go thither to feed. Horses could scarcely live in this dry soil, and the farmers employ only asses to do their work. These animals resemble ours in their gentleness only, in other respects they are well made and tall; they are of great use in this mountainous soil.

This country, considering the changes it has undergone from time and cultivation, still preserves the remains of beauty. We still see olive trees, ilexes, and trellises of the vine. The mountains, in wearing away, have preserved graceful and bold forms, and the lines which terminate in the horizon and unite with each other, describe curves so beautiful that the most skilful painter could not choose better.

Still, notwithstanding its natural beauty, this country, where the atmosphere is as pure as the sky, does not produce enough to support its inhabitants. They maintain themselves by migration. They are the people who go every year to replace the inhabitants constantly decimated in the maremmes of Rome. They go to tend the flocks and reap the fields. Often, also, to occupy their time, when not at work in the intervals of the harvest, they join the banditti, and attack travellers in the Pontin marshes.

The road passes almost always under the shade of vines, or through woods of olive trees; it is scarcely more than a path, often rough and difficult, but the scene is always varied, unexpected and winding from valley to valley. I found the same character of country, and followed the same path as far as the city of Subiaco. I could have returned thence to Rome by a better and more direct road, by going through Palestrina; but I wished to lengthen this excursion; the independence I enjoyed, and the almost unknown country I went through, were equally gratifying, and I preferred going by Licenza and Tivoli.

It is only six leagues from Subiaco to Tivoli; the journey, however, is very slow, because the road, but little tracked, goes in the direction of the slopes of the mountains, in stony paths, where the horses are obliged to go with great caution. The country becomes more wild; inhabitants are no longer seen, only ilexes and laurels. Large aloes flower on these rocks, and give a character of royalty to these solitudes. I was in the valley of the Anio, on its banks, formerly so chearful and so populous. They have been the subjects of Horace's muse; he had a country house there. I stopped at Licenza to search for its ruins, but saw only some brick foundations; they merely shewed where there had once been a house. How could they, in any other way, expect to discover the

common habitations of the Romans. They were built only of bricks, which were of such small dimensions, that, in the lapse of time, such edifices are soon reduced to dust.

But if the eye could perceive only uncertain traces of Horace's house, the imagination was near him, in places which he had celebrated. His recollection filled this spot, and imparted to it an interest which belongs only to classic ground. This sentiment accompanied me along the banks of the Anio, and did not leave me in the rest of my excursion.

After going three hours, the view opened, and the mountains becoming lower, announced the approach of Tivoli. The view of the extensive horizon which surrounds the campagna of Rome was hidden from me only by a single hill. As I was going over its ridge, I heard the noise of the waterfall. I went a little further, and I, once more, saw the roofs of Tivoli, its churches, its rocks, and its surrounding valleys. I passed the bridge of Anio, and entered Tivoli; I went through a narrow street, and stopped at the Sybill inn, where I had been so many times before.

I remained at Tivoli the following day; I sat down within the sound of the cascades; I waited, until the evening, that I might again visit the gardens of the villa Adriana. I went into the plain without having occasion for a guide. I passed through the wood of olive trees, at some distance

from the great road. I met only some laborers, who were going to or from their work. When at the bottom of the mountain, I was directed along some paths, formed on the side of the fields in the olive glades.

This plain, formerly cultivated, was now a desert; the foul air had ravaged it, and its influence extended every where except on half of the side of the mountain of Tivoli. I soon discovered ruins in the midst of these fields; they were those of the villa Adriana. I entered this inclosure, which was separated from the plain only by a bad hedge. I met there neither passengers, nor workmen; cigales and birds were its only inhabitants. I went, without obstruction, from one ruin to another; I contemplated, in silence, the venerable remains of antiquity, as there was no one to whom I could communicate the impressions I received from them. They were, necessarily, serious, for the scene which I contemplated without witnesses, was very solemn. The sun's disk was sinking into the sea; its last rays illuminated the scene, and tinged these solitary ruins with purple.

The ruins of this garden have taught us how to embellish them. The villa Adriana is, at this time, but the perfect model of one of those which imitation carried to England, and where it has assumed its appropriate name.* Ruins are scat-

* Landscape gardening.

tered about in this deserted spot. They are the remains of palaces, of temples, and naumachies, which Adrian had constructed. Art has neglected the surrounding ground, it is left to itself, and is over-grown with grass and shrubs. Groups of trees have had time to grow large and form groves in this wild spot. Ivy and moss clothe the sides of the ancient walls, and some small trees crown their tops. Nothing here bespeaks the presence of man, and yet every thing, in this solitude, attracts and charms him; the venerable age and wild neglect of which he has attempted to imitate.

I enquired for the gardener who has the care of the villa, and went to the house where he lives. Two children, pale as death, were sitting before the great entrance gate; they had not even strength enough to play with each other. I asked for their father, and the children told me I should find him in the house: this unhappy man was, indeed, there, sitting before a fire: he was just attacked by the fever, and shivering in all his limbs. His wife lay in bed, more feeble still than himself; and I could not go out of the great gate, because neither of them had strength sufficient to open or shut it.

I quitted the villa Adriana with the last rays of day, and after two hours' ride again entered Rome by the gate Salare, having terminated this long tour with those feelings of pleasure which the sight of this first of all cities has always given me.

LETTER XVIII.

PERUGIA, SEPTEMBER 25, 1813.

Sir,

I know not whether other travellers, on leaving Rome, experience the same sensations I do; but every time I have quitted this city to go northwards, I have felt a little sadness and regret. There is, probably, in this feeling, something of that instinct which secretly draws man towards the east, towards those climates which the imagination enriches with all the gifts of nature. But this attraction to a residence at Rome is, also, much owing to the agreeable life which strangers pass there. The persons who surround them, and with whom they entertain relations, have affable, prepossessing manners, and much kindness. Their language is pure and harmonious; it has a certain simplicity and grace. Their habits of life are free from restraint. We live at Rome with as much freedom as in the country, although in the centre of the bustle of a city containing a hundred thousand inhabitants.

Every step we take in Rome inspires an interest and a curiosity, which never allow the imagination to be still. The time is thus occupied without making arrangements, or exerting efforts. I never took a ramble round her hills, but I received impressions, always unexpected, and sometimes lasting. They were often due only to the influence of those names, on which rests the glory of the world. Those monuments, whose remains still charm by the elegance of their beauty, serve as evidences of the traditions which time has transmitted to us. In their presence, the uncertainty of doubt subsides, the mind, with confidence, resigning itself to a sort of credulity. This conviction, this belief, impart to the recitals of history an interest and an animation which they otherwise could never have received.

Antiquity presents Rome to us great and noble above all other cities; but modern ages exhibit it under an aspect still more august. The throne of its earthly glory has been broken down, for it was the will of God to raise his altars amidst its ruins and recollections. He has depopulated the country surrounding this sanctuary, with a scourge which, unceasingly, carries death with it, as if to teach Christians, that it is not the delights of this world which are promised them, but the hope of that which begins beyond the grave. A holy resignation, therefore, involuntarily affects the soul

on entering the temples of Rome. The spirit of God alone resides in them at this time, for religious ceremonies are there no longer celebrated; and this noble solitude inspires a respect, perhaps, more sacred, and a sort of regret, which render divine worship, in these temples, still more solemn.

Before quitting Rome, perhaps for ever, it remains for me to give you some details of its rural economy, and to describe part of the estates of the church which border upon the Apennins.

The Roman cultivators were not willing totally to remain strangers to the universal progress, throughout Europe, within the last twenty years, towards improvement in the economical arts. It would certainly have required capitals much too large to have changed the general system of culture adopted in the Agro Romano; it would have been necessary to have imported a new population, and, above all, to have changed the atmosphere; they, therefore, wisely declined it, but in the zeal which animated all agriculturists to transplant into Europe the productions of India, Rome, from its latitude, was pointed out as the country best adapted to these attempts.

Many persons have tried them; they have attempted the culture of indigo, sugar, and cotton. Near Terracino some fields were planted with the sugar cane; the crop had not been taken up when I was there, but the plants appeared large and

vigorous. Indigo did well in these districts. The cotton could not bear the variable climate of Rome; it is only near Naples that it has found an atmosphere and sun like those of its own country. During two years the experiment has been made on a large scale, on the fertile land in the neighbourhood of Rome, but in 1811 the plants were eaten by grasshoppers, and in 1812 the rains, which fell in the middle of September, made the capsules open before they were mature, and the wind dispersed the cotton. These two trials, which were very expensive, disgusted the Romans with cultivating colonial articles; and I doubt whether they will, for a long time, allow any experiments or innovations. Their system is again directed by local circumstances; it is the result of the long history of Rome; it has followed its changes, and with it formerly served as an example to human industry: with it, it is now perishing, and these fields must necessarily become deserts, when the capital of the world is only a solitude.

In going from Rome, in the direction of the Tiber, and proceeding northwards, we are obliged to take the great Florence road, as far as Monterosi. We leave this road about a mile from this town to take, towards the east, that which goes to Ancona by Tolentino, and to Florence by Perugia. I wished to go in this last direction, and I went on horseback from Monterosi as far as the farm of

Torre in Pietro, because I intended to stop there. This domain is in the neighbourhood of Citta Castellana, and I passed through it to get into one of the most beautiful countries in the world. The road passes through a suite of meadows; they are shaded by large oaks, under which the flocks pasture. The appearance of the country is not wild, although so much wooded, because the air and the light are freely admitted through the branches of the trees; and they are grouped in the hollows of the ground, as we see them in the pictures of Poussin, who came into this country to select sites for his landscapes.

I was accompanied by M. Georgi, who farms the domain of Torre in Pietro. The city of Veyes formerly stood on this spot, and M. Georgi, after some indications, wished to try the digging in these grounds. M. Millin, whose researches brought him into these places, very much encouraged him, and his first labors were singularly successful. I was acquainted with M. Georgi at Rome, and he wished to conduct me himself to the places which had been dug.

We left the great road, after having passed the old city of Nepi, and we soon arrived at Torre in Pietro. This house is only one of the casales which are scattered about the campagna of Rome, but it contained the articles which had been found in the places lately dug. Among them was a

statue of Tiberius. He had a country house here. This statue represents him in a commanding attitude, though seated in a curule chair. Canova places this statue in the rank of the chef d'œuvres which the ancients have left us, and he values it at a great price. A second discovery, perhaps less admired by the artists, is that of a temple, in perfect preservation, though buried under ground: this temple, in other respects, has not the magnificence of those at Paestum, nor that of the Temple of Peace, nor even that of Vesta, for it is only ten feet in diameter, and of a proportionate height. It resembles the Temple of Love in the gardens of Trianon; and it can only be supposed to have been intended as an ornament in the garden of Tiberius, and not to have lent its altars to receive the sacrifices offered to the divinities of Rome.

Whatever may have been its destination, this temple possesses a singularity hitherto unknown in the pomp of architecture. None of the eight columns which support the roof belong to the five established orders of architecture, exclusive of which it was supposed that the art could not find correct proportions. Such, however, was the talent of the artist, that he found a different stile for each of the eight columns, and they all, in spite of the whimsicalness of this invention, are in a pure taste, and most exquisitely finished. It may be thought that there is something Indian in this

conception, but in coming to Rome it must have passed through Greece.

This monument, it cannot be doubted, will soon be engraved, and artists will find in it new combinations of picturesque effect. Their genius, under the authority of ages, will henceforth admit innovations, the censure of which will fall only on the ancients.

This museum, so long preserved in the earth, includes, besides, several statues of less value, and of not so much interest. After having seen these, my attention was almost mechanically directed to two chests, into which they had promiscuously thrown a quantity of articles, which they considered of no value. They were implements of husbandry, small bronze articles of furniture, ornaments of the same metal, also horse shoes, bits, and iron articles of various kinds. These common articles had the same shape and dimensions as those which are still used in Italy. There is not the smallest difference between them, and ages have not, in this respect, effected the least change in the customs of the Romans.

I remained a long time, excited by curiosity, and employed in searching, myself, into these chests, where Roman antiquities were exhibited in their plebeian dress; and I felt a peculiar interest in examining these secular trifles.

M. Georgi is going to convey his museum to

Rome; it will soon acquire celebrity there, but I was gratified in seeing it in its original state, on the very soil which had so well preserved it, and I thanked M. Georgi for the obliging civility with which he had shewn it me. We took leave of each other, and I continued my journey in the road for Florence.

In the neighbourhood of Citta Castellana, the ground is torn up by deep gulleys of a singular appearance; I could scarcely tell whether they were produced by torrents or by volcanos, though it is not easy to suppose that streams, which have not here a rapid fall, should have produced these hollows in the heart of the rocks;* they seem to have been the wreck of some violent catastrophe.

These precipices are covered with woods, as if to conceal their horror. The earth is suddenly thrown down, and immense fragments of reddish rock are precipitated into these gulfs; they are covered with ivy and eglantine, and from the bottom of the hollows evaporates a cool moisture, which keeps up a constant dew, and preserves the plants always green.

In the centre of this natural rampart, amidst ivy and mosses, are seen the old ramparts of Castellana; on the tops of the bastions are antique stone turrets, which seem to watch over the embrasures, which time and weeds have deformed.

* Gutta cavat lapidem non vi sed sæpe cadendo.—*T.*

These fortifications are not very old, they are the work of Julius the Second. But there is nothing modern at Rome; every thing there has the appearance of antiquity.

Until we pass Otricoli the plains are, throughout, divided into large domains. The keeping of sheep constitutes almost all the farming. They feed in the pastures, going, alternately, from the open to the sheltered spots, resting or feeding at their pleasure; free in their movements, and scarcely knowing the restraint imposed upon them by man in other countries.

On arriving at the first chain of mountains every thing assumes a new physiognomy; the air is no longer noxious, the habitations increase. We no longer see large farm-houses dismantled, but the small ones of cultivators and vine dressers. Under the harbors which shade them, children are heard playing, and their mothers calling to them; we again see families, households, life, and, perhaps, happiness. All around the houses we see plantations of olive trees, vines, maize, and corn. The land is uneven and hilly, but every where cultivated; every where are seen marks of industry. Still further, descending the heights of Narni, we pass over a plain, furrowed by the plough, and alternately cultivated with wheat and maize. This plain reaches as far as the gates of Terni, where the beautiful forests of olive trees begin; they

border the valley which we pass in going to the superb basin of Perugia.

Before entering it we see its whole extent before us. It is bounded on the right by the high chain of the Apennins, which separates it from the Adriatic; and to the left by a chain not so high, to the east of which begin the maremmes of Tuscany. In the middle of this basin are seen, at a distance, the churches of Fuligno; still further on the mountain, are distinguished the ancient towers of Perugia, and very near it, the old chateau of the Dukes of Spoleto, with its embattled walls and half-ruined turrets.

The high mountains, whose tops are covered with snow, and which overlook the Adriatic, present to the eye only woods and deep hollows, whence spring rivulets, which tumbling down from cascade to cascade, fall, in silver particles, into the valley, where they keep up a perpetual verdure. On the opposite side the hills extend in a long succession of amphitheatres, exhibiting thousands of habitations. They are just distinguishable through the foliage of the vine arbors and the olive trees, with which they are surrounded. This plain, like that of Tuscany, is divided into an infinite number of small metairies, planted with mulberry trees, maples, and poplars, on which are suspended garlands of vines. Under these vines they cultivate wheat, maize, and vegetables, a little saintfoin, and

some wild clover. The only difference is, that this country, though equally fertile, but less improved than that of Tuscany, leaves the streams to run here in their natural course. Large trees grow on their sides, and there is an agreeable mixture of natural vegetation, and of that produced by art.

There are no pastures here, nor large flocks; a few working oxen, many small black horses for carrying, and some sheep, are the only animals we see. The vagrant flocks of the maremmes feed, in the summer, on the pastures on the summits of the high chains of the Apennins. Many Romans have farms here. They take a pleasure in coming to pass the autumn in this valley, to superintend the harvest, and the division of the crops between the metayers and themselves. The other farms belong to proprietors who reside in the three cities of Spoleto, Fuligno, and Perugia.

Spoleto is nearest Rome, it is, also, the most distinguished by its situation. An entire hill, which, at a distance, seems to belong to the high chain of the Apennins, is separated from it by a torrent, whose waters roar at the bottom of a precipice. This hill, insulated on the plain, was fixed upon, at a period anterior to history, for a citadel, for it is surrounded by the remains of one of those walls called Cyclopean, no other name being known by which to designate them. At a later period Trajan raised new walls on this enormous

base. The dukes, who have sometimes been called the tyrants of Spoleto, built a castle on the point of these rocks, whence, without fear, they could command the whole valley. To convey water to this scarcely accessible height, the dukes built a bridge most frightfully high; like that of the Gard, it serves to convey water from one mountain to another: it has neither its magnificence, nor its elegance, but it has a more singular effect on the landscape. Gardens, olive groves, terraces, and houses, cover the declivity of the hill, and extend as far as the plain. The mountains which surround Spoleto are, as it were, rendered sacred by a crowd of pious establishments. In the middle of the wood of ilexes, are seen the fronts of ancient convents; here a suite of chapels, which have been so many hermitages; further off a church, which is approached by a long collonade, the ancient monument of the piety of the pilgrims; for they, formerly, brought their offerings to raise this edifice. On the side of the road, they shew you a humble chapel, where a wax taper is burning before a Madona: a grate preserves the figure; it was painted by Raphael, when he was very young, and was studying at Perousa, under Pierre Perugia.

Beyond Fuligno, in the middle of the fields, in a place where the valley becomes wider, we arrive near a large church. Its noble architecture presents

itself to the view of the traveller, perfectly isolated. It is the church of the Angels, the metropolis of the order of St. Francis; the city of Assize is at a little distance from it, on the side of the mountain. The appearance of this temple strikes the imagination; its solitude and its magnificence impress the mind with a religious sentiment; for nothing but devotion could collect together the faithful in so desert a place.

At some distance from the church, we began to ascend a pretty high mountain; it terminates the valley, and the ancient city of Perousa covers its summit. This mountain is rounded in smooth slopes, and unites its two arms with the two chains of the Apennins. On the opposite side the view is lost in the valleys of Trasimene. They extend, in the midst of many hollows, as far as the basins of Arezzo and Florence.

These irregular and varied slopes, and the environs of the city, are divided into an infinite number of gardens, covered with flowers, fruits, and bowers. Trees shade the gardens, canals water them, and a fresh air preserves their verdure; the whole scene is youthful and smiling. The road passes by these groves before it reaches the foot of the great walls which defend the city. Suddenly we find ourselves amidst past ages, in large streets, lined with ancient palaces. A noble and antique architecture decorates them. Vast churches raise

their domes to an immense height; and from terraces in the city, we command all the surrounding plains. The situation of Perugia is one of the most beautiful I ever saw.

Valleys, more shaded and still more picturesque, conduct us to the borders of the lake Trasimene: its view would have been more striking, had I not been so lately admiring those of Nemi and Albano. The waters of Trasimene are inclosed in a frame of verdure, which is reflected from their unruffled surface. Wooded hills compose the surrounding grounds, but without any point more particularly attracting the attention. Soon after passing the lake we enter Tuscany.

I have thus described, as correctly as I could, the appearance and the economy of the ancient states of the church: this I have done, I acknowledge, as a sort of justification of, and in contradiction to, all the authors who have censured the ecclesiastical administration. It might, indeed, have been more efficient, more active, and have adopted superior principles of political economy. But in acknowledging these faults, does not common sense sufficiently shew, that, under the mildest government in the world, in the best climate, and during a continual peace, industry alone would, a long time ago, have profited by these advantages, if a dreadful law of nature had not doomed this country to desolation. No administration will, there,

obtain better results; and that of France will not effect more in the campagna of Rome, than it has hitherto done in the lands of Bourdeaux and the heaths of Brittany.

The beautiful valley of Fuligno, as well as Latium, was under the government of the church, and it never depopulated the plains; it neither destroyed the olive tree nor the vine. Immediately on leaving the region of foul air, in the states of Rome, as well as of Tuscany, all is again alive and populous. It only remains to know whether the Popes have caused the pestilential air. Twenty years ago, most travellers would have asserted it, but, even at present, the best chemists are not convinced of it. Still less are they convinced that the foul air proceeds from the maremmes, or from the nakedness of the soil, since the air is equally deleterious on the mountains as in the middle of woods. It is possible, without doubt, that a more enlightened government might, formerly, have prevented its fatal approach, but there is now no remedy, and future ages will not see Rome restored to its former prosperity.

LETTER XIX.

FERRARA, OCTOBER 5, 1813.

Sir,

Italy is, perhaps, of all countries in Europe, and even in the world, that whose different aspects present the greatest variety and dissimilitude. Travellers, in passing through its different regions, successively traverse wild mountains and well cultivated hills, fertile valleys, and desert plains. Their attention is, sometimes, agreeably directed to smiling fields, which every where exhibit the appearance of social happiness; while near these regions are seen others, which seem to have been decreed by Providence to become the tomb of the human race.

This infinite variety in the forms under which nature appears in Italy, proceeds from two causes equally interesting. The one belongs to the dominion of nature, and the other to the power which man exercises over the earth, the original beauty of which he can, at his will, increase or destroy.

We observe in Italy, better than any where else, the influence of social customs over the works of the Deity, because the human race has, no where, so long exercised a power over nature. The different forms of civilization have, in their turns, in this charming country, experienced all the changes of prosperity and decay. There, history, thus to express it, becomes experimental; and there, without effort, we may study the changes which the different combinations of society produce on the elementary forms of the globe.

It is, also, easy to observe, in each of the sovereignties, which have divided the country and the history of Italy, the genius of the states to which each of these divisions belongs. It is thus that we find, in the Florentine agriculture, the age of the highest cultivation: and around Genoa we recognize the spirit of a state jealous of an independence, often compromised, and for the preservation of which it was under the necessity of rendering its approach difficult and dangerous. The ruins of Volterra declare the annihilation of its independence; and the solitudes of the campagna of Rome shew the mild indifference of the church to terrestrial objects.

These historical evidences impart much interest to the tour of Italy, and political economy may derive from it lessons of experience.

I will cite, as an instance, a rural establishment,

the whole of which appears to me to merit a description. It is situated in the vale of Chiana, below the city of Crotona.

At the bottom of this valley there was formerly a lake, not of large extent, but surrounded with marshes. It spread around deleterious exhalations; and this rich valley was lost to agriculture. It had been given to the order of St. Stephen, to whom, however, this large property was of no value.

The genius of Tuscany was desirous, at that time, of fertilizing and improving every part of her domain, and it suggested to the Knights of St. Stephen a plan for draining the lake and the marshes.

It was ingeniously contrived, and well executed. The land restored to agriculture was near three thousand acres. A canal was opened to turn the superfluous water into the Arno, reserving only the volume necessary to irrigate the fields, at pleasure, by forming a number of secondary canals.

It would have appeared natural to have built a magnificent farm-house in the centre of these lands, and to have made of it only one large domain. But the Tuscans were, at that time, too enlightened respecting the true principles of economy, to resign so valuable a territory to rural inefficiency. The order of St. Stephen, on the contrary, divided it into seventy metairies. Roads, formed at right angles, served for all the purposes of the farms, as

well as to divide them; and the roads were bordered by canals.

In each of these divisions they built a rustic habitation, which, after the custom of Tuscany, was well proportioned, and in a good taste. The land was intended to be, in part, arable, and in part meadow; and trees were planted throughout, some of which produced fruit, but others only shade. They are, however, alike covered with vines, to which they serve as supports.

I stopped, in my journey, at the entrance of these lands, that I might go over them and notice their economy and cultivation. As I went along, I passed over grass roads. Numerous streams flow under the natural bowers; sluices spread the water over the meadows, and, in consequence of this arrangement, they preserve, in the middle of the summer's heat, a freshness and verdure grateful to the senses and the imagination.

In each of these farms was a family of metayers, who had the charge of cultivating about forty acres. Each farm had one or two pair of oxen, and some cows. They produce corn, silk, fruit, vegetables, and wine. The economy of these domains is sufficiently extensive comfortably to support the village families who cultivate them. When I was there, they were occupied in sowing wheat; the day was favorable, because a gentle shower in the night had softened the surface of the earth,

and it easily broke under the teeth of the harrow which passed easily over it.

The whole population was employed in the fields; some were ploughing, and quickly opened the furrows. A little boy urged on the oxen, while his father drew the furrows. Women raked up the weeds, which, from the fertility of the soil, had accumulated, notwithstanding the care of the laborer. Behind them the seedsman passed and repassed, walking with an even and measured step. His hand, by an uniform motion, threw, on the furrows, at equal intervals, the seed which was to vegetate there. He took it out of a linen bag, suspended at his back; the end of which hanging loose behind him, resembled some ornamental drapery. A sort of joy was expressed by his companions. They were under the influence of hope, that only antidote of human suffering. It is always a festival when the laborer, confiding in the goodness of Providence, commits to the earth the seed which so many accidents seem to menace. Past ages alone encourage him with the assurance that, like his fathers, he shall reap harvests in the same fields.

The plains of Crotona form one of the most beautiful theatres of human industry. Nature had there formed a lake; industry converted it into meadows. They had been unhealthy; they are now become healthy; they were deserts, they are

now inhabited by a population, whose easy circumstances ensure their comfort. Art, indeed, has prepared and arranged every thing there; every thing, even the streams of water, move with regularity. One would expect a monotonous result from this, but there are, in these fields, so many trees and so much verdure, the buzzing of so many insects and the singing of so many birds, that we imagine ourselves in the middle of a grove, where men had only to open roads and cultivate the fields.

Soon after passing these beautiful valleys we arrive at Arezzo. In this city we again recognize the Tuscan stile, and the Florentine elegance, which we had lost in the decayed towns of the states of Naples and the church. Here the freshness of the buildings is carefully preserved. Broad pavés, often repaired, afford, in the streets, convenient walking, and are kept particularly clean. The promenades, the fountains, all the public places, are preserved with as much care as private property. Arezzo is situated in the fertile vale of Chiana, not far from the Arno: but at a little distance from this city the vale and the river make a curve, and a long circuit, before they arrive at Florence. They pass along the foot of the Apennins, and the Arno washes the woods of the Vallombreuse, while the great road to Florence passes, in a shorter line, through the region of the calcareous hills which occupy the centre of Tuscany.

These hills succeed each other, and with their pyramidal forms cover the surface of the country as far as Sienna and Montepulciano. They produce the best wines in Italy; and the olive tree grows on most of their declivities: but they are, in many places, too sterile and too meagre to admit of a profitable cultivation; and they are then shaded only by some forests of sea pines.

On these hills they have successfully cultivated the red-flowered saintfoin. I saw some beautiful crops, on an estate belonging to Colonel Ricci. He has brought with him, into Tuscany, many ingenious and instructive observations, made during his extensive travels. He has bought a flock of the Spanish vagrant sheep, which M. De Lasterie had introduced into Tuscany. This flock passes the summer on the Apennins, and he has provided accommodation for them, in the winter, by clearing some dry spots, on the hills between San Casciano and L'Incisa.

We, at length, descend the heights of San Donato, to Florence, along a rapid torrent, which is kept within bounds by the walls of a number of terraces and gardens. The Florentine culture and population again shew themselves, in all their peculiar appropriate excellence and agreeable costume. Nature displays herself on the charming banks of the Arno, and it is impossible to view with indifference the pictures she presents before

us; they seem, however, to have been painted only in water colors, and they have none of those traits which ennoble the landscapes of the south of Italy.

There is a great pleasure, when, in travelling, we return to places we have lately visited, that imperceptibly, contract a sort of relation and friendship for those in which we have enjoyed some happiness. It seems as if we had become domiciliated there, and we find ourselves familiar with the objects before us. I experienced this pleasure, in again finding, at Florence, the same room I had occupied in my preceding journeys. The windows opened towards the Arno, and I remarked how much this part of Florence resembled that near the Louvre. I recollected, that for the embellishment of this part of Paris, they were indebted to two Queens of the Medici family, and I was not surprised at this resemblance. Italy was then the only country of the arts, of fashion, and of taste, and models were there sought for the decoration of all other places.

I went to the tribune, once more to see the Venus which Canova has presented to Florence. The men think it more beautiful than that of the Medici; the women prefer the latter; they are probably in the right. I went to the museum, to look for the Baron Bardi, and to see the beautiful collections under his care. He conducted me, in the evening, to a solemn sitting of the Georgophil

academy, or agricultural society, where prizes were to be distributed.

This academy, the father of the agricultural societies, holds its meetings in the great hall of a superb palace. The avenues to it were spread with flowers and greens, as if the products of the fields came, thus, to offer their homage to the learned men who were endeavoring to fertilize them. The members were arranged round an estrade, on which the president was seated. They requested me to take a seat on the benches; a great number of spectators surrounded them. The secretary read an account of the labors of the academy during the preceding year. A member then read a pleasing and short eloge on a lately deceased academician. It appeared, by the interest this paper excited, that he was much regretted at Florence. I was surprized, and so will you, to find this old man, in the funeral eloge, praised, for having been fifty years a tender and faithful lover, and having thus, in an exemplary manner, discharged the duties of that situation. This trait paints the manners of the Italians, such as they lately were, better than La Bruyere, or La Rochfoucault, would have done.

A little abbé then read to the assembly a paper on the sugar of the beet root. It was full of humor and irony; it was a most perfect model of

attic pleasantry. It excited the most lively applauses; and I doubt whether the French language could, on such a subject, express any thing so comic and satyrical.

They did me the honor to elect me one of the associates of the academy, and I wish I were qualified to merit the title.

On the following morning I was at Poggio a Cajano, the favorite residence of the sovereigns of Tuscany. This royal habitation has a singular appearance of magnificence and simplicity; it is at once noble and rustic, grand, and still champêtre. On a hill, near the Arno, the Medici built a square house, in a heavy style, which has since been called rustic. The roof is so extended, as compleatly to cover a large balcony, the contour of which takes in the four sides of the building. From this balcony the prospect extends over the pleasant views presented by all parts of the mountains and valleys. On the south side a vegetable garden, inclosed in walls, and filled with trellises and espaliers, occupies this front of the chateau. The others look into meadows, intersected by canals and shaded by different kinds of trees. The interior is sufficiently ornamented. The situation has nothing in it more splendid than might have been adapted to the residence of a rich private individual, who has no other wish than to render his residence and domains commodious and productive, and every

part, even the avenue, produces fruit. The Medici have stamped this character on every thing erected by them.

I have but little to say, respecting that part of the Apennins we pass, in going from Florence to Bologna, as there is nothing there remarkable. The road passes on the least elevated part, so that, in going through it, we see neither the wildness of the mountains nor the charms of the valleys. The only curious object I remarked, in this track, is the work now executing, with a view to render the road more accessible to travellers. The works of this kind undertaken and compleated by the French government, within five years, in Italy, are prodigious. Should they be continued three years longer, all the communications in the country will be open, all the bridges finished, all the declivities lessened, and a residence in Italy will have acquired all the advantages, of which it is, in this respect, capable.

Arrived at the highest ridge of the Apennins, near Filigarez, on the confines of the Bologneze, we at once discovered the plains of Lombardy, the Adriatic, Illyrium, and the Alps. A new horizon opens to our view; it announces the richness of the soil and the luxury of the fields. The poetic charm of the valleys of the Tiber and the Arno vanishes with the magic of their names, and the verdure of the cypresses. The colors of the east

disappear with the richness of the earth, and the splendor of the sky. We again see, to the north of the Apennins, willows on the borders of the meadows, with alders and ashes; they surround the fields in which corn and clover grow; at the same time we again recognize the indigenous plants of the northern countries, with the tints they spread over the plains. Nor have the animals, themselves, those savage looks and ferocious manners, the appendages of liberty. We see in the Bologneze, heavy cows, in good condition, feeding quietly in rich meadows, watched only by playful children. Nature, less active, does nothing more than present to man a fertile soil, ready to produce fruits and harvests. There the stems of wheat, bending under their own weight, lean and rest on each other; here the maize raises its orange-colored head, almost twenty palms high; further off a shaded canal pours its water, in considerable streams, on the parched meadows, and in one night restores their verdure.

In the adjoining fields long lines of pasteques and melons cover the ground with their beautiful fruit. The metayer comes, in the evening, to gather the melons; he selects the ripest, and his children, all delighted, heap them up, and wait until their elder brother, having unyoked the plough, comes with his strong oxen, harnessed to a cart, to fill it with the heaps and carry them to

the farm, in the midst of the shouts of joy of the whole family.

Amid this extraordinary fecundity of the earth, are seen, hanging from the branches of all the trees, long bunches of grapes, whose purple juice drops on the leaves, and adds another trait to the richness of this culture.

It continues thus on the right bank of the Po, as far as Parma, while, towards the Adriatic, we find, at the mouth of this river, a singular and devastated country, called the Polesin. This region begins above Ferrara, and extends to the borders of the sea, spreading like a delta, in the form of a triangle.

The Po reaches the confines of this plain, filled by the waters which the Alps and the Apennins pour into it. The slowness of its motion, in these meadows, produces a gradual deposit, at the bottom of its bed, of the mud which it brings with it. The bed raised by these deposits is become, at length, higher than the level of the land it passes through. The waters, therefore, would, a long while ago, have inundated these plains, had not the neighbouring inhabitants, to prevent this submersion, raised dykes, successively, to check and regulate the course of the river. They form, thus, an artificial bed, in which the water is kept at an elevation greater than the level of the lands adjoining the river.

It became necessary, in this way, by labor, to form artificial beds in all the branches of this river: one trembles to think of the imminent danger to which the neighbouring inhabitants were exposed, from such an immense collection of water being constantly liable to throw down the banks which confined it, and to inundate the plains. Indeed, frightful inundations periodically destroy the surrounding country; for in the whole delta there is not a single hill, or a place of security, and they have even given up all endeavors to construct the means of security.

We cross the Polesin in going from Bologna to Venice; though I had no intention to visit this city, I wished to know something of this singular country, and I went from Bologna on the road to Ferrara.

On leaving Bologna we go about five leagues in the fertile plain which surrounds that city; we then approach the eastern branch of the Po. The country, there, begins to be without trees, and assumes a dull and monotonous appearance. The inclosures, the farms, and cultures, by degrees, diminish. They are more thinly scattered, and, at length, they totally cease. Some laborers, more hardy than their neighbors, here and there continue a few furrows in the plain. The road, which was firm and sounding, becomes, at once, dull and muddy; the sound of the wheels and of the horses

feet is no longer heard. An immense uniform horizon is before us: it extends, indefinitely; nor can a reason be given why it terminates. We see nothing distinctly, except the dykes, which we slowly approach. They extend as far as the eye can reach, like a green rampart. Above these banks are seen masts, and the rigging of vessels, which pass up and down the river with a majestic slowness.

In the plains are seen neither villages nor huts; we do not even see those long lines of willows, which inclose and divide the wet lands of the north. They are naked in the plains of the Polesin. At distances, only, are seen not stone but wooden buildings, intended for stables, and to contain hay. Cattle feed round these buildings. They are kept in the pastures by broad ditches, covered with water lillies. The cattle reared in these prairies consist of horses, cows, and pigs. All these equally exhibit the peculiar character of animals fed in marshy places. They are large, lean, thin flanked; their haunches are low, their limbs long, and not well jointed; their countenance mild and unmeaning; and all their movements are slow and indolent.

This character of country, dull and uniform, continues as far as the gates of Ferrara. An unexpected picture there strikes the eye; we enter a large city, regularly and superbly built; but one would think that the inhabitants had, that day, left

it, with one common consent, and without any accident appearing to have compelled them to do so, for we saw neither destruction nor ruins. In one quarter, near the port, there are still some houses inhabited by artisans and sea-faring men. But all the parts of the city, where there are large houses, are empty and abandoned. The fronts of these palaces extend on the two sides of almost all the streets; they are strait and regular, but the grass covers the pavement, and some cows were wandering about in perfect security, attracted by the sight of the grass, which promised them a good pasture.

I went into some of these palaces, struck with the beauty of the architecture: there were neither doors, windows, or furniture; but their stair-cases, their sculpture, and their colonades, still remained. Ivy, with its foliage, had tapestried the sides of the walls; it had crept to the top of the building, and, like the convolvulus, had surrounded the pilastres of the ballustrade, which ornamented the top. On the terraces with which these palaces were crowned, some jasmines and pomegranates, left in vases, had, from time and neglect, spread about their branches; they hung down, full of flowers, on the marble cornices, the former decorations of these ruined palaces.

The same sort of country begins again beyond Ferrara, and extends a long way, until we have

passed all the branches of the Po. There is some resemblance between the prairies of the Polesin and the *steppes* of the campagna of Rome. They are each liable to the scourge which compels the inhabitants to adopt the pastoral system; but in the dangers which menace the Romans, there is something mysterious and irresistible, which preys upon the imagination. In that land of volcanoes every thing is frightful, and liable to be destroyed by fire; from time to time, the earth lifts itself up, as it were, to be relieved from the burden of the human race, or to annihilate it by closing upon it. The dangers occasioned by the floods are, in some degree, periodical; they are neither mysterious nor unexpected. By long habit every one anticipates the approach of this disaster. Every house is provided with boats, and when the inundation is announced by the fall of torrents of rain, they embark with their valuables, float on the sheet of water, and, in a sort of migration, seek new shores and friends to console them in their misfortune.

The inundation is, fortunately, temporary: it occurs, at least, once in three years, but its coming is foreseen, and the consequences are not so serious as might be expected.

LETTER XX.

BELLINZONA, OCTOBER 20, 1813.

Sir,

Beyond the Polesin, and upon the left bank of the Po, the land attains the highest degree of fertility. This valley, situated at the feet of the greatest mountains in Europe, displays, near their abysses, all the gifts of Providence, and the riches of the creation. The traveller views, with admiration, the Tyrolian Alps; despoiled by time, and lost in the clouds, they are only subjects of contemplation, while he quietly passes over a plain where art and nature excite the most agreeable of all earthly sensations. The sun, there, is clear and ardent, but large trees, which cover the fields, protect them from its rays. The cloudless sky would render the soil arid, but being watered by numerous canals, an unfading verdure is kept up. Under these happy auspices we see the crops grow and the meadows flourish. Here every farm-house is a rural palace, where all the luxury of the fields is displayed. And to prevent the dangers which the

fall of waters might occasion in the valleys, the same power which called the universe into existence, has formed, at the feet of the mountains, natural basins to receive the torrents which fall from the Alps. They always rise to a certain level, and then pass, in gentle streams, into beds, the extent of which is measured, and the course directed.

Every thing, even the air we breathe in this region, is clear and pure. It is commanded only by the high chain of Alps, and by the five lakes of higher Italy, the view of which adds still another trait to the beauty of the landscape.

In going to Lodi, in the road to Cremona, we pass over the most beautiful part of the Milanese. The soil is so fertile and so well watered in this province, which bears the name of Lodesan, that they have relinquished the growth of corn for that of the indigenous plants, which the land produces spontaneously. These meadows, constantly irrigated, are mowed, and spring again four times in the same year; their produce is superior to the richest corn, for I never saw grass so thick and so high. It is composed of the common grasses, of trefoils, of plants with large leaves, and a great many ranunculuses, whose yellow flowers spread a peculiar brilliancy over the tint of the fields. An immense number of cows feed on this herbage; during the summer they are fed in the stables, on the produce of two crops cut green; the others are

made into hay for the winter food; in autumn they are allowed to feed on the last growth in the season.

The farms in the Milanese are not large. In a soil so productive and so dear, the land is necessarily much divided, but they are more extensive than in Tuscany; there are many farms from fifty to a hundred acres; because grass culture requires less labor and care than fruit, garden, or corn crops. They require also less capital, and the produce is not so liable to accidents; and for this reason the proprietors and metayers in the Lodesan are equally enriched.

One of the principal sources of expenditure, in their culture, is the annual purchase of cattle, for by an inexplicable singularity of nature, the cows of the third generation lose their quality of good milkers, in the midst of the most nourishing food. It is necessary, every year, to obtain some from Switzerland. All the horses employed in the country come, also, from the mountains of Helvetia. The capital of the flocks belongs to the proprietors, but they are maintained at the expence of the metayer.

The soil of the whole country is divided into parcels of two or three acres, on account of their being near the canals, which separate them; and by the simple lowering of the sluices, the whole land, which is perfectly level, may be inundated. These frequent irrigations would deteriorate the grass, if

it were not refreshed by a thick coat of manure every three years, while it remains in pasture. In spite of this powerful means of amelioration, the meadows will deteriorate in course of time. The umbelliferous plants, the angelicas and ranunculuses, flourish at the expence of the trefoils and the grasses. The soil is no longer irrigated; it is ploughed and cleaned in autumn, to sow hemp upon it the following spring. This is the only way in which the weeds, in this land, can be extirpated. The stems of the hemp attain a prodigious height, and when they are taken off, in order to take the advantage of the fertility of the soil, they plant vegetables in autumn, to prepare it for sowing oats upon it in the spring. The straw of these oats grows to six or seven feet high, and moves in waves from the influence of the wind; wheat is lastly sown after the oats, under the expectation that the soil, weakened by the preceding crops, would not make it too vigorous. Maize is usually planted the following spring; and a second crop of wheat succeeds it, and finishes the course.

The land is then left to itself, and a crop of grass immediately springs up without any seeds being sown. In the winter it is manured, and the new meadow is thus, again, spontaneously formed. As soon as the new turf is become thick, the sluices are opened, and it is irrigated with the water of the adjoining canal.

The same meadow commonly continues fifteen years, and the course of the crops five only. The culture of the Milanese includes thus twenty years, in the following series:

First year....Hemp, followed by vegetables.
Second.....Oats.
Third.....Wheat, followed by vegetables.
Fourth.....Maize.
Fifth.....Wheat.

Fifteen years natural grass, manured every third year, and mown four times a year.

In these twenty years sixty-seven crops are produced on the same land. Sixty-one for the use of cattle, five for the food of man, and one only for his clothing. I should think there is not a country on the globe which gives such a proportion of agricultural crops.

To obtain them, the land is, however, manured only five times in twenty years, but this is done largely and contrary to the universal practice; the manure is solely applied to the meadows, and never to the ploughed land. This method forms the distinctive mark of this peculiar economy, and can be attributed only to the superabundant fertility of this rich province.

In a farm, where I stopped, near Marignano, of a hundred acres, I found that the proportion, between the arable land and the meadows, was about thirty acres under the plough and seventy acres in grass.

The metayer kept a hundred cows, and some animals for draft, on the seventy acres of meadow. He estimated the average return of each cow at two hundred francs, and thus obtained, from his dairy, a gross revenue of twenty thousand francs. He reckoned the arable crops at only half of the grass, and the produce of his thirty acres at only six thousand francs. The gross produce of this farm was then twenty-six thousand francs, or two hundred and sixty francs per acre. This sum is equally divided between the proprietor and the metayer. The proprietor, out of his moiety, is to pay the taxes and the charges of irrigation, and the metayer deducts the whole expence of cultivating the land from his share.

You may judge, from this, that the art of culture is very easy in this part of Lombardy; it consists in taking advantage of the great fertility of the soil, and obtaining, with little exertion, immense crops. The merit of this system is due to the inventor of the extensive plans of irrigation, applied to the whole country between the Tessin and the Adige.

One can scarcely conceive how they could connect together and direct, in a single plan, so extensive a net-work of canals; for it is obvious, that each separate part had relation to the whole, that the flowing and distribution of the water might be every where adapted to the form of the ground.

There are several systems of canals, which have

no connection with each other, as each takes its source from a different lake; from each of which proceeds a principal canal, which they call the sovereign: it is formed for the double purpose of the interior navigation and to convey the water to each of the irrigating canals connected with it. These different canals belong, some to government and some to capitalists, but never to proprietors of land near the rivers; for they can never divide any part of the course of a canal. The owners of the canal lett to them the use of the water, at a certain price, and in ascertained proportions. The laws and a special court of appeal secure to the one the undisputed possession, and to the other the use.

The canals of Lombardy are not lined with bricks as those in Tuscany. On account of the great quantity of water, they are formed of very large dimensions. Lines of oziers are planted on the banks of the canal to keep the soil firm. Behind these, cuttings of alders and willows are put into the ground, intermixed with large plantations of poplars. The last trees must be planted at considerable distances from each other, as their heads are not pyramidal, like the cypress. Their stems, also, do not bend as the indigenous poplar of France, but they rise almost out of sight, like the birch tree, and like it extend their large branches. It is a long time since all these canals were formed, and the plantations have since had time to grow

and become old. Hence the motion of the stream has formed small sinuosities and hollows, resembling the natural course of rivers. The willows, planted on their banks, are become broken trunks, covered with mosses, which, clothed with ivy and convolvulus, overhang the surface of the river. The poplars raise their symmetrical trunks above these masses of verdure, like a colonade, whose proportions, though unequal, are very large. This scene, taken together, is very striking; individually, it is pleasing and chearful.

Towards the west of Lodesan, and on the banks of the Tessin, we quit this beautiful country of meadow and shade. Naked plains open to the view. Few habitations, and little activity, are seen here. The verdure is, throughout, alike pale and discolored. These fields are appropriated to the rich culture of rice.

In the slight fall, which draws the water of the lake to the Po, are some low grounds, where the water does not run off. An ingenious person, they say he was a Dutchman, proposed to employ the stagnate water of these low grounds in the cultivation of rice. The experiment succeeded, which is not often the case.

The spot appropriated to this culture is divided into a great number of canals, lined with banks of turf. The water, here, is perfectly stagnate, under which grow water lillies, displaying, at the surface,

the useless decoration of their flowers. These canals, formed with great regularity, inclose squares of two or three acres, secured on all sides by dikes. The sluices admit the water into them, and when once admitted, it has no outlet.

The rice grows at the bottom, some inches below the surface of the water. The plant resembles barley in the spring; like it, it has a knotty stem, a small ear, and a long beard. Not so high as wheat, its straw is of a more dry texture, and of a paler tint. It never bends, or turns on one side; and the wind, in shaking it, produces a rattling and continued sound, like that which is heard among reeds in stormy weather.

The culture of rice is extremely simple. The water is lett off the land after harvest; the rice is then sown after a single ploughing, and without any other preparation. The sluices are not opened to inundate the land, until the rice is a few inches high. It grows like an aquatic plant, always under the water. In this way it compleats its growth, and the sluices are not opened to lett the water off until near the period of its maturity, to allow the land some time to dry, that the harvest men may go into the squares and reap the crop. They tie them into small sheaves, which lie heaped together some time before they are threshed. The ground remains dry until it is again ploughed for another sowing of rice.

This plant is cultivated three years successively, on the same land; no manure is carried on during this time. The water would destroy its quality, and it is alone sufficient for the purposes of vegetation. But after these three following crops, the soil is exhausted, and requires light, air, and rest. It is left uncultivated, and the humidity of the soil produces the spontaneous growth of the plants adapted to its situation. It is manured, and then only, on the new turf, and for two years a most abundant crop of hay is obtained, though but of an inferior quality.

The rice course is, thus, five years; three of which are in rice and two in natural grass. During these five years the land is manured but once, at the time when it is not under water.

Could you suppose there is a breed of sheep adapted by nature, or rather naturalized to these wet places, feeding only on the water plants which grow in the rice stubbles, and the grass which covers the banks. This breed of sheep is strong, healthy, and fruitful; the ewes always producing two, and sometimes three lambs at a birth. No other animal could feed these boggy lands without sinking in them; and Providence seems to have allowed this peculiarity, to shew that there is not a place on the earth, which may remain desert, nor a plant which may not become food to some beings in the creation.

The produce of a crop of rice is estimated at double that of an equal crop of wheat. This rich revenue is repeated three successive years on the same land, and the interval which is necessary to give the land rest, produces forage. The rent of rice grounds is higher, because they require little labor, not often repeated, nor expensive. The profit, therefore, has been such that the owners have not been willing to divide it with a metayer. The rice grounds are let at fixed rents, about a hundred and sixty francs an acre, and even at this enormous rent, the farmers have often made large fortunes.

But the possession of such wealth would be too valuable, if some inconvenience did not attach to it. A serious calamity was soon found to spread itself over the rice grounds. Sickly laborers are seen passing along the banks, to superintend the distribution of the water. They are dressed like miners, in coarse cloth, and they wander about as pale as ghosts, in the reeds and near the sluices, which they have scarcely strength enough to open and shut. In crossing a canal, they are often obliged to plunge into the water, like amphibious animals, and they come out wet and covered with mud, carrying with them the germs of fever, which never fails to attack them. They are not the only victims, as the harvest men seldom get in the crop without being seized with rigors; the air in all

the neighbouring places being deteriorated by the stagnant water. The avidity of the rice planters is, therefore, restrained by law, as they are prohibited extending this culture beyond certain limits. The evil had taken place in the district, and the population was dispersed, before all the danger arising from this culture was ascertained.

Before quitting Italy, and while at its extreme limits, it may be said that it still exhibits to travellers a last view of its horrors and its beauties. To the north of the Milanese, on the borders of the lakes, towards the frontiers of Switzerland, we see the scenery of the east, blended with Alpine scenery, including, within the same horizon, the most striking views that embellish the earth. It brings together, as by a kind of magic, fertile plains, the images of life and enjoyment, and high mountains, where reigns an eternal winter. We perceive, by an insensible gradation, all the shades which color the surface of the globe, and all the forms which constitute its beauty. The plants of the north and the south intermix, in the same valley, their verdure and their perfumes; oranges grow near firs and cedars on the side of the cytissuses.

These banks, enriched with all the gifts of nature, display themselves on the hills and on the borders of the lakes of higher Italy; and its delightful situation has, for a long time, attracted a numerous population. Its banks are covered with an infinite

number of houses; they are not palaces, for the domains are too small to admit of such being built; nor are they cottages, for the proprietors are in too good circumstances, not to have attended to the comfort of their dwellings. They have not built large houses, but they are still not without decoration; and they are more commodious than rustic. There is nothing champêtre in them but their situation, and the bowers which shade them. Around their houses are orchards on terraces, where are growing, at the same time, the fruits of Europe and of Asia. Under the orchards run streamlets, which come from the Alps, bringing with them the transparency of their ice, and the murmurs of their cascades.

The verdure of these hills is reflected by figures broken on the waves of the lake, a moving picture, painted by nature, as if to teach us, so to say, that the works of the creation may be imitated.

The beauty of the day induced me to embark on the lake Lugano, in my way to the frontiers of Switzerland; as I advanced, the hills became larger, as I approached the Alps, the houses were fewer, the thickets not so close, and the trees larger. They were not fruit trees, but they had immense branches, which had been bent by the winds. Rivers fall in torrents, and tumble over rocks into the lake. Nature became mute, no singing was heard, and no other noises could be distinguished but the

distant ones, produced by the falling of masses of snow and the approach of storms. The air was no longer embalmed with the perfume of orange trees, and I breathed only the native odor of the pine. The boat reached the further side of the lake; it entered a gulf surrounded with rocks. The water reflected only the color of the snow with which the Alps are covered; and in looking towards the sky, I saw mountains rise before me, which, by their age and magnificence, might seem to bear the crown of the world, and be its sovereign.

I disembarked at the foot of these rocks, near Lugano. I went, with something like reluctance, towards these wild valleys, which seemed to have no outlet. The only habitations I saw, were some cabins and wooden huts, scattered on the side of the mountains; I heard, at a distance, the sound of the flock bells, the echoes of which seem so pleasing to the Swiss shepherds.

These monotonous sounds, one of the harmonies of the Alps, announced to me the approach of a flock, and I hastened to meet it. They were all cows, belonging to the valley, and were then coming from the mountains. The shepherds had not ornamented their heads with flowers, as when they left the valleys, because the season for flowers was over; but they were decorated with green branches.

The villagers left their houses and quitted their

work, to meet their cows. They recognised, in them, the companions of the winter and the supporters of their families. They, also, seemed pleased with their reception, and each of them, recollecting the door of the stable, where they had been fed, saluted, with lowings of joy, the family of their masters and the roof which was going to protect them.

I could not be deceived at this rustic scene; it exhibited nature and the manners of the Swiss. I found myself on the soil of my country, but still I could not avoid turning my eyes, once more, towards Italy, and with an inexpressible emotion of the heart, I bade a last adieu to that charming country, which cannot be quitted without regret, and which is never revisited but with fresh pleasure.

LETTER XXI.

GENEVA, NOVEMBER 1, 1813.

Sir,

On the subject of the statistics of Italy, the French government has furnished some data, which were unknown before, and by which we discover and appreciate the advantages produced by the general economy of this beautiful part of Europe. Under its administration, the mayors have been directed to make a return of the population in each commune, and there can be no reason to suppose that they have exaggerated it, as this must have been a disadvantage to each commune. The amount of all these returns is a population of seventeen millions, three hundred and twenty-nine thousand, six hundred and twenty-one individuals.

This number, calculated on the fourteen thousand square leagues, which form the extent of Italy, gives to each square league twelve hundred and thirty seven inhabitants, a population greater than that of France or the British isles. It even exceeds, by three millions, that at which it was estimated in the ancient statistics.

Every census of the population, made within twenty years, has shewn that the European population has been rapidly increasing, in the course of the eighteenth century. This numerical increase of the people, during this period, is not surprizing. It must have been the natural consequence of the high state of civilization, which has, every where, taken place; it has been the necessary consequence of the general developement of every kind of industry. We have, at once, seen productive labor, the commerce of exchange, the system of credit, and the infinite multiplication of the mutual relations between individuals, create numerous means of labor and existence.

The economists, for a long time past, suspected this increase in the European population, but without having been able to prove it. To ascertain it a new mode of administration was necessary, war and conscription. We are compelled, at this time, to admit this result of civilization, for it is known that the largest armies raised by France never exceeded two and a half per cent. upon the whole population. It remains to determine, whether this great multiplication promotes the happiness of the human race. But this is a question which I shall not attempt to resolve, because it appears to me that it has already been done with considerable ability.*

* By Malthus.

There is then, in Italy, a population of twelve hundred and thirty-seven individuals to a square league. This single fact places it in the rank of the most flourishing countries in Europe. It has a greater claim to this rank, because there must be deducted from it almost all the unhealthy and depopulated regions, and the mountains which inclose them, as they furnish a very small contingent to the whole population.

Italy is, moreover, neither a manufacturing nor a commercial country, for it obtains from other countries most of the manufactured articles for which it has occasion: and its ports are more frequented by foreign ships than by its own. She interferes but little in the general relations of commerce; she neither attracts them to her, nor provides depots for them. The source of her prosperity must, then, be sought for in her agriculture, since it cannot be in her manufacturing industry.

It becomes, then, interesting to analyze, with some care, the processes and the results of an agriculture so flourishing as to be the principal source of the wealth and population of such a country as Italy. This view may serve as a point of comparison, and, in this respect, it appeared to me useful.

The prosperity of the agriculture of Italy depends on many circumstances. They all concur in

producing this important result. The following are those which seem to me most to merit attention. The excellence of the climate, the fertility of the soil, the subdivision of property, the system adopted in the rural operations, the different assolemens in the culture of the land, the industrious cultivation of the hills, the use of oxen in culture, and the judicious arrangement between the agriculture of the mountains and that of the maremmes to bring each of those regions into profit.

I will go over, as briefly as I can, these different conditions of the Italian agriculture, which will produce a sort of recapitulation of all the rural details which have been given in these letters.

I have often spoken of the charming climate of Italy; and it is so well known, that it cannot be necessary that I should again describe the purity of its air and its soft temperature. Nor need I enlarge on the advantages which agriculture derives from a climate so genial, and favorable to the growth of plants from different parts of the world. There results from this a great variety of productions, from which the cultivator can select those best adapted to his soil and situation. The sun admits of the grapes ripening on the trees, and without injury to the crops. Trees grow on the borders of the fields, which are covered with vines, from which are produced the wine which is drank by the laborers, the wood with which they warm

themselves, and the valuable leaf which produces silk. They have no occasion, therefore, in Italy, either for forests or vineyards; the whole country is so covered with trees and orchards, that they obtain a sufficient quantity of wine and wood, without appropriating particular places for their production.

The soil of the extensive alluvial plain comprehended between the Alps, the Adriatic, and the Apennins, is fertile and productive, without, however, being so much so as La Limagne or Belgium. The volcanic lands, in the south of Italy, form a soil still more fertile, which extends from the borders of Ombrona, as far as the eastern extremities of Calabria.

Between these two regions we must place, in the class of bad soils, the argillaceous maremmes of Tuscany and the calcareous mountains of the Apennins. Only a fifth of the surface of all Italy can, therefore, be considered as sterile, a proportion seldom occurring in an extensive country, and almost the reverse of France, whose geoponique map marks, as fertile only, a fifth of its whole extent.

The property in the land is very much divided in Italy, except in the maremmes. The great proprietors, instead of uniting several estates under one system of farming, have, for a long while, on the contrary, had the good feeling to divide them into different farms. They have built as many

houses as were necessary for the accommodation of the different farms. In consequence of these divisions and these buildings, the fields are covered with rustic buildings, placed in the middle of the small domains which they are intended to cultivate. The extent of these farms has depended upon the kind of agriculture adopted in each country. It is some hundred toises in the wheat lands of Lombardy; in the gardens of Tuscany it is not more than some hundred feet.

This great subdivision of land has vested on the surface of Italy an immense floating capital of industry; it has multiplied the families of cultivators, and, in consequence, the hands employed in agriculture; it has been equally favorable in placing the farmers in the centre, and within reach, of all the points of their domains. By this means they are able, without exertion, to pay more attention to their culture, to vary more their crops, and superintend their preservation. In multiplying farms, orchards are also multiplied, as well as gardens, poultry, &c. Articles, the minute attention to which is neglected on large farms, and can never prosper but by the daily care of an economical and industrious family.

It is thus that Italy has become, from the calculations and wishes of the proprietors of estates, a country of cultivation, on the small scale, though nature would seem to have intended its rich plains

for cultivation on an extended scale. They have, in this way, combined the two-fold advantages of the two systems, to effect the prosperity of each.

The enonomy of small farms has been adopted in five-sixths of Italy, since there remained no large estates leased at fixed rents, but the maremmes. The small farms, with some exceptions only, are cultivated by metayers, with whom the owner divides the crops in kind. It is a system of interested management, the advantages of which, in Italy, appear to me incontestible. It occupies and constantly interests the proprietors, which is never the case with great proprietors, who lease their estates at fixed rents. It establishes a community of interests, and relations of kindness, between the proprietors and the metayers; a kindness which I have often witnessed, and from which result great advantages in the moral condition of society.

The proprietor, under this system, always interested in the success of the crop, never refuses to make an advance upon it, which the land promises to repay, with interest. It is by these advances, and by the hope thus inspired, that the rich proprietors of land have gradually perfected the whole rural economy of Italy. It is to them that it owes the numerous systems of irrigation which water its soil, as also the establishment of the terrace culture on the hills. Gradual, but permanent improvements, which common peasants, for want of means,

could never have effected, and which could never have been accomplished by the farmers, nor by the great proprietors, who lett their estates at fixed rents, because they are not sufficientiy interested.

Thus the interested system forms, of itself, that alliance between the rich proprietor, whose means provide for the improvement of the culture, and the metayer, whose care and labors are directed, by a common interest, to make the most of these advances.

The lands in Italy, formerly under the Romans, were divided into small farms, of which we have proof in their writings, and in the localities, which we can still recognize. They were not cultivated by metayers, but by slaves. When Christianity abolished slavery, the class of cultivators, in easy circumstances, from whom farmers are taken, did not exist in Italy to replace the slaves. The proprietors, then, had no other means of restoring the cultivation of their estates but by placing them in the hands of manumised slaves, on the sole condition of paying the rent of the farms, with a moiety of the produce, in kind, of all the crops.

It has been well demonstrated, in a pamphlet on the colonies, that the system of cultivation, for half of the profit, would be the only one admissible on the abolition of slavery. This was proposed as a substitute for the traffic in negroes, which public opinion had abolished. I have no doubt, should

there chance to be, in one of the colonies, a well-informed proprietor, he will try this plan and treat with the freed blacks. They would see it spread rapidly, and without effort, through all the colonies, where the interested system would replace that of slavery.

The same system would be equally beneficial, if introduced, at this time, into Poland and Russia, where public opinion is abolishing peasant slavery, and where it has become indispensible to discontinue the ancient system of agriculture, and introduce one more rational and more productive.

Italy is, no longer, cultivated as in the time of the Romans, on the system of fallows. It is no longer cultivated in the three-years' course, the plan of successive crops being universally adopted. It is difficult to fix the period when this change took place. It does not, perhaps, go further back than the time of the crusades; it being probable that, about this time, the maize plant and the Canaan-cultivation were brought from the east. The increase of industry and public wealth, which took place at the termination of the crusades, must, at that time, have favored the introduction of a more active culture, by furnishing it with capital, and a vent for its produce.

In most of the systems of crops, at present adopted in Italy, maize is always found to alternate with wheat. This plant has many peculiar advantages,

and to its propagation must, in a great measure, be attributed the increase of the produce of the Italian husbandry.

The grain of maize supplies the place of corn, and is applied to the same purposes; but its culture, instead of binding and injuring the soil, keeps it, on the contrary, during its vegetation, in a loose state, open to the influence of the atmosphere. It is thus in a favorable state for the vegetation of wheat, which succeeds the maize.

Italy is so rich in natural pasture, that artificial grasses are little cultivated. Those which are most used are the Dutch trefoil in Lombardy, and in the south that which bears long purple flowers. On the hills of Tuscany, a little saintfoin, with red flowers, is sown; but lucern, so much prized by the ancients, no longer exists in Italy; and I was surprized to find that there was not a single plant remaining. The succession of crops is so arranged as to produce the greatest possible quantity of human food. Notwithstanding the excellence of the climate, there are few crops which furnish materials for manufacture: I remarked only silk, hemp, and some plants for dying; to which lately must be added the cultivation of cotton, in the neighbourhood of Naples.

I should think the system of successive crops, and the modern agriculture, ought to have increased, by one third, the total produce of the Italian

husbandry, since the wheat has continued to recur regularly every two years, on the same land; and the fallows alone are replaced by a crop of maize, of beans, or vegetables, whose nutritive value may, without exaggeration, be estimated at half an equal crop of wheat.

This increase of one third in the nutritive produce, ought to be nearly in the same proportion in all other countries, where the system of successive crops is substituted for the Roman agriculture. A change which you, more than any other person, have contributed to promote; and the progress of which nothing will henceforth check, unless it be the errors of the farmers in the choice of the plants, which they select for their new crops.

It is an easy matter to vary the course of crops on a single farm, and experiments of this kind have seldom failed. But such an innovation becomes an almost invincible difficulty, when it is attempted to change the habitual course of crops in a whole province, for the general interest being then exposed to some risk, the farmers and the consumers are equally hostile to the innovation. This must necessarily be the case, as it requires, from the first the experiment and the risk, and from the second a change of old habits respecting food. To effect this change in rural economy, powerful and forced circumstances are, almost always, requisite, because these only can break the inveterate

habits of culture and consumption. It was thus the two years of scarcity, in 1795 and 1811, appeared to have been necessary, in France, to establish potatoes as a permanent crop in the course of agriculture. We still, even to this day, see the miserable provinces in the centre and west of France, attached, notwithstanding the universal developement of rural industry, to the vile culture of ecobuage,* which they derived from the Celts.

The healthy and fertile parts of Italy ought, in our days, to produce a third more than they did in the time of the Romans. This increase, due entirely to the system of continued crops, is, in part, counterbalanced by the loss, at this time, sustained in the maremmes, by the discontinuance of their cultivation; and particularly because these provinces, being in the vicinity of Rome, must have had immense crops in the prosperous period of its history.

We shall, perhaps, even find the proportion between the ancient and modern revenues in Italy still more exact, if we place the introduction of the Canaan cultivation on the Apennin hills, about the time of the crusades; for this system, in converting the poorest soils into real gardens, created a source of wealth from nothing.

* The old system of merely scratching the ground, before sowing the seed, with rude kinds of hoes, still used in the south of France, called, I believe, the *aire* and the *bouchet*.—T.

The calcareous hills in the southern latitudes, abandoned to themselves, and left to their natural slopes, are soon reduced to the utmost aridity, by the falling down of the soil. It is the consequence of the heavy rains in these climates. The roots of vegetables, laid bare at the surface of the earth, are, by degrees, dried up by the heat of the sun. They perish, and leave after them only a few odoriferous plants, dispersed on the rocks, to cover the wrecks. This is the picture, at this time, exhibited in most of the hills in Spain, in Provence, and in the Riviere of Genoa.

Nothing can be opposed to this destructive tendency of nature and time, but the giving to sloping surfaces other levels and different forms. This is an immense work, for it requires the removal and the replacing the whole surface of the hills. This labor is still greater the nearer the rocks are to the surface; it being then necessary to break them, and build walls with the fragments to keep up the terraces. It is sometimes sufficient to build these walls of turf, but whatever method is employed, the establishing this terrace culture, on these extensive surfaces, employs an incredible number of hands, and an immense capital.

It could then only have been produced by a superabundant population, which no longer finding space in the plains, in which to establish themselves, preferred forming new land by the downright labor

of digging and building, rather than emigrating; to seek, elsewhere, inhabited countries.

This artificial land, so dearly purchased, was designed only for the cultivation of the more valuable vegetables. These terraces are always covered with fruit trees; placed thus in a reflected sun, amidst the reverberation of so many walls, the fruit is most abundant, and superior in kind.

No room is lost in such limited situations. The vine extends its branches along the walls, and there displays its leaves and its fruit. A living hedge, formed of the same vine branches, surrounds each terrace, and covers its with verdure. In the corners, formed by the meeting of the supporting walls, fig trees are planted to vegetate under its protection. The owner takes advantage of every vacant space left between the olive trees, to raise melons and vegetables. So that he obtains, at one time, on a very limited extent, olives, grapes, pomegranates, and melons, every fruit and every vegetable necessary for the support of his family.

The produce of this culture, under good management, becomes sufficient to maintain a family of five persons with half the crop of seven acres, divided, often, into more than twenty terraces.

A great part of Italy has adopted this excellent economy. It embellishes most of the hills and the feet of the mountains. By the secret of this culture a large population is maintained on the produce of

the olive tree, of that tree, which, at this time, as well as formerly, is an emblem of rural happiness, and the peace of the world.

This admirable rural system, like every thing human, has its periods of prosperity and decay. The labor which it requires is begun by a population already numerous and enterprizing, nor does it cease of several ages; but after a lapse of still more years, we always arrive at a period in the history of the same people, when, after having passed through every stage of prosperity, they, at length, through unexpected and inevitable revolutions, lose their opulence and splendor. Their powers diminish, their means fail, discouragement succeeds the genius and the love of enterprize. Every thing is neglected and abandoned. The efforts of man can, no longer, overcome the powers of nature. By their own irresistible weight, they destroy the labors of industry, when time has broken the lever which should support them. Storms and wind overthrow the artificial soil which man had arranged with so much care. Trees are thrown down and perish; the earth returns to its former state, and there soon remain, of all these constructions, only shapeless vestiges covered with briars, where even the cattle find but a scanty pasture.

Such is the picture exhibited, at this time, in Palestine, Greece, Spain, and in many of the hills in the south of France. Every thing induces the

belief, that the agricultural system which I have just described, originated in the mountains of Lebanon: because the nature of the soil and the climate seem to have suggested this kind of industry, when the human race multiplied in these regions as around its cradle.

With the Arabians this Canaan cultivation passed into Spain, where it now languishes. With the crusades it came into Italy. A long time before it had been brought to Marseilles by the Phoceans. From that time it embellished the hills which inclose the valley through which the Rhone passes. Vines were planted on these hills instead of olive trees. Thence, going northwards, this oriental culture, by degrees, advanced into the country of the Druids. Its progress was not uniform, for its establishment required regions and circumstances in every respect favorable. It is thus that our ancestors, at the end of the seventeenth century, witnessed the emigration of the Protestants, who came to protect themselves on the borders of lake Leman, on those hills whose noble and charming aspect has been described by the most eloquent of men.

This mode of culture has so much increased the territorial value, that the land of the mountains near Vevey, which was of no value before the arrival of the Protestants, sells, at this time, at the enormous price of ten thousand francs per acre;

and the whole space, thus increased in value, is about two square leagues. This industry is the most certain mark of the prosperity of the country in which we observe it. It always bespeaks a powerful population, a great accumulation of capital, and an entire confidence in the future; thus exhibiting a picture of happiness, which excites an involuntary and always pleasing impression: I was ever open to this impression: in whatever part of the world I experienced it, it never failed to call to my recollection the ancient people to whom we are indebted for the invention; and I gratify myself with the reflection that there is something on the earth which may survive the destruction of nations, and that, at least, they will bequeath to each other the inheritance of an art which embellishes their fields, and renders their harvests abundant.

Italy uses only oxen in its agriculture; I did not see a single horse harnessed to a plough. Oxen have two incontestible advantages over horses; they take no more capital, and perform their work more economically than horses, for they have not, like them, any expence for shoeing, for harness, or any annual loss on their capital. This saving is, at least, one hundred and twenty francs a year on each pair of cattle; a considerable sum in a country cultivated for half of the produce by the metayers, who are always poor, and have no ready money.

I shall insist no further on the preference of oxen to horses, because it is now admitted by all the economists; but most of those who have considered the subject, so important in rural economy, have not assigned the true reasons why oxen continue to be used in the southern regions, while in all those of the north, the horse is preferred as the companion of the laborer. This choice is not the effect of blind habit; nature herself has pointed it out, by placing in the south a breed of oxen which are active, quiet, and healthy, while those in the north are heavy, dull, and indolent. The horses, on the contrary, in the southern latitudes, are small, light, and not adapted to heavy work, while, in the north, we see them attain a great size and great strength.

Thus the agriculture of the north deriving little use from oxen, prefers horses; on the contrary, in the south, horses would be too weak for country work, and they substitute oxen of a strong make and nervous temperament.

We have observed, in Italy, four different breeds of horned cattle, exclusive of the species of buffalo; they are the yellow oxen of Piedmont, which we find in the south of France; that of Hungary, with gigantic horns, the first for work and quietness; that of Lombardy, produced by a cross between the Hungary bulls and the Swiss cows; and, lastly, an African race, of a bright color, which we find in the maremmes of Naples. These four breeds

equally supply good oxen for labor ; but the cows, crossed with the Swiss breed, are the only good nurses and milkers.

The quantity of large cattle, in Italy, is prodigious; I believe it is, at least, as great as that in Switzerland or Holland, since there are sixty-seven thousand horned beasts in the single campania of Rome. This must be attributed to the watered meadows, in this country, producing so much more feed, and to the cattle being more quiet.

The little farms, however, which are so numerous in Italy, would be embarrassed to raise the stock they require, if the pastoral culture of the maremmes did not furnish the different markets, where the small metayers supply themselves.

The maremmes sell not only many heifers and oxen, but they possess the only studs, where the horses, required by all Italy, are bred; it would be even impossible to rear them anywhere else, on account of the subdivision and small inclosures of the land. The space in the maremmes, not occupied by oxen and horses, serves for the support of sheep. Two millions of these animals, divided, as in Spain, into vagrant flocks, pass the winter in the maremmes of Tuscany, of Rome, and of Naples. They are not, like them, kept only to furnish commerce with valuable fleeces; the produce of these flocks, of which the shepherds make the greatest profit, is the milk of the ewes. With the milk they make

cheeses, which are in much request in countries where the cows produce no milk. Thus nature, in each climate, substitutes the one for the other, of the races of animals intended for the use of man. A species of ass, as well as the ox, acquires a larger size where the horse degenerates, and when, by the influence of climate, the cow ceases to give milk, the ewe, more fruitful and a better nurse, offers to the shepherd her heavy dug.

These different species of vagrant animals, unite, in these desert regions, the two-fold advantage, of consuming, according to the season, the herbage of the maremmes and that of the rude mountains of the Apennins; pastures, which would be lost without these flocks, and from which, at the same time, are derived all the animal produce, which the wants and the consumption of agriculture require.

The soil of Italy is, every where, applied to profit, and there is scarcely a single spot, which does not produce the utmost which its situation and natural fertility admit of. The Italian cultivators have been able, at different periods, to introduce into their country, to adorn and enrich it, the different systems of rural economy hitherto known. From Holland they have brought the system of canals and meadows, and from Flanders the art of making one crop succeed another, without interruption, only by varying the kind. From the east they brought the maize, the vine, and the olive tree;

they have, moreover, adopted the eastern method of appropriating and preparing the soil for the cultivation of rich vegetables. From the pastoral people they have learned the method of rearing numerous flocks, by passing them, according to the seasons, from the mountains into the plains. More recently, but with the same good sense, they have attempted to grow rice, brought from India, on their wet lands, and thus to change their marshes into gardens. In other places they cultivate the mulberry tree, and lastly, within our time, they have successfully attempted to introduce the colonial culture into Naples.

The travelling agriculturist will thus find, in Italy, equally perfect models of the pastoral culture of the first ages of the world, and of those formerly practised in Palestine; he will, at the same time, see the beautiful cultures by assolemens, and each of them judiciously applied to the soil best adapted to it. The agricultural combinations must, indeed, have been, necessarily, well executed, to have made it so flourishing; for the soil is not of a wonderful fertility, since, in taking the average of the amount of a great many crops of corn, the produce has never been more than five and a half for one. Yet Italy, besides its internal consumption, pays for the manufactured goods it receives from foreigners, with its rough produce of corn, of rice, oil, of wool, and silk, produced by its agriculture;

and, notwithstanding these exportations, the soil of this happy country, readily, supports a population of twelve hundred and thirty-seven inhabitants per square league.

Such is the result of the numerous observations, which I have had the honor to present to you, in the course of this journey; and it only remains to assure you of the sentiments with which I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER XXII.

GENEVA, NOVEMBER 10, 1813.

Sir,

It would be not a little interesting to make a comparison between Italy and England, on the subject of their respective economy. These two states, under the two zones which divide Europe, have adopted two different systems of rural operations, and which, in political economy, are considered as opposed to each other. They have each, however, been able to support an equal population on an equal surface, thus presenting two different solutions of the same problem.

Italy has continued the system of small farms, which it derived from the Romans. England has discovered the method of successfully cultivating large farms, by applying to them the productive principle of the division of labor. They have, each, equally succeeded; and the first inference to be drawn from this fact is, that there is nothing absolute in political economy.

Nature did not intend the works of the creation should be uniform and homogeneous. It has varied, in a thousand ways, the forms presented on the surface of the globe, as it has given to every people, and every individual, a different genius. This variety in the climates, the soils, and in vegetables, could not be merely intended to gratify the sight, by merely offering to our contemplation, images ever new and infinitely varying. But even this variety obliges every nation to submit itself to laws adapted to the nature of the country it inhabits, and the soil which supports it.

Thus political economy is the science by which we are taught the application of human industry, with the greatest advantage to every part of the globe. Its immediate object, therefore, is the increase of the means of existence, of the population and the wealth of states, that is to say, of their power.

This happy diversity multiplies the scenes exhibited on the surface of the globe. It increases their interest, and gives birth to morality, because it places different people in presence of each other, to serve as mutual examples, and to unite them by various wants and reciprocal assistance.

Providence, every year, sends sea fish from the icy poles towards the tropics. It would seem even to have been intended that man, by his industry, should exchange all the productions of the globe,

to form, among nations, a common bond, destined to correct the animosity generated among them by politics and war.

There can be, therefore, no uniform system of political economy, because there is nothing uniform in what belongs to human kind. Creation has impressed upon the earth a varying character. It has given to it that of dissemblance; and there can be nothing of universal application, unless it be the maxim which prescribes not to do to others that which we wish they should not do to ourselves.

The science of political economy comprehends the study of every branch of human industry. But I shall here speak of that only which treats of agriculture, that is to say, of the art, which, by labor, obtains, from the earth, the different productions, the germ of which has been furnished by nature.

Authors, I am disposed to think, have not sufficiently distinguished the two essential parts which divide the science of agriculture; for this distinction is, in some sort, the key by means of which we penetrate into the obscurity of political economy. Thus I will distinguish, by the name of *rural exploitation*, the art of cultivating the fields, of varying the crops, and of increasing the kinds and the produce. But by *rural administration* I will distinguish the system adopted in each country, with respect to the subdivision of property, the nature of contracts for leasing, the conditions by which, in

these contracts, the tenants are directed in the mode of cultivation; and lastly, the local customs used in the administration of these domains.

This knowledge of the rural administration appears to be of an importance not sufficiently considered; for the prosperity of states depends essentially upon this system. The source of it is concealed within each farm, and within each hamlet. As the country population is always the most numerous, it constantly supplies the laboring classes of the nation, and furnishes its defenders. It gives, in short, the base on which the social order is established, and according to which all the different orders of the nations class themselves; an arrangement, whose good or bad combinations eventually decide, in the last resort, the public prosperity.

Agriculture, being well understood, its progress will, henceforth, receive no check, unless it be fettered by the system of rural administration. There being some combinations in these systems, by which every rural improvement may be paralyzed, and the worst culture become stationary. This deplorable result is often produced by a trifling circumstance. We live, each of us, in a country, where, by the common routine of the notaries, who draw up leases, they have been, for ages, copied from each other. The proprietors, who are intelligent and cautious, think they cannot more effec-

tually protect their estates, than by taking the same securities adopted by their ancestors. The consequence is, that a farmer, if a conscientious man, must cultivate his fields in no other way than that established by the Romans; and all those who are desirous of following the example you have given, cannot, without a fraud, adopt the improvements which you have introduced into our agriculture.

I mention this circumstance, because it is almost universally the case in France, and because it is right to shew of what importance to the welfare of states, is the establishing good systems of rural administration. It is a branch of legislation which appears to me to have been neglected, and even to have been unknown until the present period.

It does not belong immediately to the empire of the laws, but has its dependence on institutions which form the code of national customs and manners. The power of this lever has not yet been calculated, and it may, possibly, be one of the useful labors to be undertaken in the nineteenth century.

One would not trust the calculation of this power to Mr. Proni; experience and facts can alone furnish its amount; on this account I shall feel an interest in offering to you a sort of comparison, in respect to the results of the two opposite systems of rural administration in England and in Italy.

The period of making this comparison appears to

be favorably chosen, that, in which these two nations, the one progressive, and the other, to say the least, stationary, have an equal population on the same extent of country. It is, in some sort, a point of similarity, of which we should take the advantage, it being probable that in fifty years the bases will be changed, and it will then be curious, again, to make a comparison with that, the principal features of which I am going to attempt to shew you.

These two countries are particularly adapted to this kind of experimental theory, because they have, between them, some relations in common, and some similar advantages. They are both maritime countries, and there are ports and harbors on their coasts, where ships can be easily sheltered. Both have had the advantage of good local administrations, by means of which good roads have been formed, and canals, and every arrangement calculated to facilitate social intercourse. They have each, for a long time, paid a territorial tax, that is to say, a direct tax on agricultural income. It is, at present, unequally levied in England, but so powerful is the wish to continue institutions there, that rather than change they submit to this unequal assessment. Italy, the old theatre of administrative experiments, has been, a long time, registered, and the land equally and judiciously assessed.

These two countries, in short, have equally succeeded in founding their agriculture upon a system

of successive crops, different, on account of their climate, but well adapted to the native powers of their soil and temperature. The land, by these two systems, has been brought, not indeed, to the maximum of its production, because this maximum will never be ascertained, but to the highest production known in rural science.

It would seem that the uniformity of bases, so important also to the public prosperity, should have produced results common to both countries. Nothing is, however, more unlike than the constitution of society in England and in Italy. I will endeavor to analyze them both. Perhaps the result may be some of those singular consequences which it is important to remark.

England, civilized by the northern nations, received from them the feudal system, and the great divisions of property, which spring from it. The progressive increase of their capitals has kept up this division of property, and has rendered it, there, almost universal. The calculating genius of the English taught them that it would be advantageous to apply the productive principle of the division of labor to the management of the land, a principle which can be applied only on an extended scale, as that alone admits the constant employment of the whole of the powers of labor.

It results from the application of this principle to the cultivation of the land, that nothing is lost

in its administration, neither time, power, nor expense. Every thing there, consequently, tends to increase the net produce. Two consequences have been the natural effect of this increase: they have had a direct influence on classing the inhabitants of England, and have created the social order on which depends its enormous prosperity.

The advantage of the administration of land has become so great, and has appeared so certain, as to have induced an entire class of citizens to practise this kind of industry, and to share its profits. It is thus that the class of farmers was formed in England, and that it occupies one of the degrees in the social order of its population. A class of high importance, and upon which rests, in a great degree, the prosperity of the state.

This class undertakes, first, to pay the proprietor a rent of the land at the rate of about four per cent.; secondly, at its own expence, to cultivate the whole cultivable land in England; thirdly, to obtain an improved annual value, by the clear profit of its industry; in short, to form, by degrees, an accumulating capital.

To increase this annual profit, the sole object of farmers, they have employed two concurring means; the one is the economy effected by the division of labor, constantly improved; and the other, the gradual amelioration of labor, and of their system of successive crops.

The apparent results of this universal tendency of agriculture, consist in a successive amelioration of the soil of England and its produce: in the superiority of all the breeds of domestic animals, in the perfection of agricultural implements, and of the methods used in agriculture, that is to say, in an acknowledged increase in the value of the landed and manufacturing capital of England.

The division of labor, in giving birth to an order of merchants, whose trade consists in the implements of agriculture, has produced, at the same time, a second result; namely, that of diminishing the number of hands employed in agriculture, and thus allowing many of them to offer themselves to other kinds of labor. Hence manufactures have employed these spare hands, and the system of manufacturing labor has been extended further than in any other country.

The same principle is applied to every branch of manufacture; and the invention of machines, by economising manual labor, has produced the same redundance of hands in each particular branch of industry. A redundance which some new branch immediately employs, and by means of which it prospers in its turn. This effect, communicated from one to another through the whole mass of the people in England, has given it the means of cultivating the soil with the fewest hands possible, and of turning over the superfluous number to all

the branches which constitute its commercial and manufacturing industry; until this vast field, having absorbed all the population it has occasion for, there still remains a numerous superabundance to supply the maritime and colonial wants.

This population, in some measure, kept up by agriculture, is thus collected in the workshops of commerce, or dispersed over the globe. Every where it accumulates a profit from its industry, and it brings back the tribute to its own country. By this perpetual progression the profits of industry double or treble, even in England, the annual revenue of the nation; by this, also, its floating capital is become greater than the value of its land.

Hence the proportion between the classes which compose the social order of the nation is no longer the same: the class of cultivators, which, in Italy, composes four-fifths of the nation, has, in England, been reduced to half of its population; the other half belonging to the manufacturing or consuming classes. All the powers of the nation being at once employed under circumstances in which, so to express it, every one finds his place previously prepared for him: these powers suffer nothing by collision or loss of time; they produce, at the end of the year, the utmost which could be expected from their labor.

The English nation thus makes greater profits

than any other, and can accumulate, every year, a greater economised capital; and it is for this reason that it is, at present, much the richest nation in the world.

Were the unnoticed consequences of this order of things as important as those, the principal results of which we have just remarked, its superiority could not even be put in comparison with any other, and it would seem desirable, in other places, to adopt the system which regulates England.

We have seen that the point of departure from this system took place at the time when the farmers adopted, in the cultivation of their land, the principle of the division of labor; because it was then only that they restored to manufactures the hands, which they had, unnecessarily, employed; in this way confuting the opinion, which maintained that agriculture could not be better promoted than by increasing the number of its hands.

The natural progress of this system, in creating capitals, and opening ways to industry, has transferred the whole landed property of England into the hands of capitalists, always desirous of thus investing a part of their fortune. Their competition has been such, that they have, necessarily, dispossessed the whole class of little proprietor farmers; and this consequence has followed, the richest and least numerous class has undertaken to farm, with the capital it has acquired; while the immense class

of dispossessed farmers is reduced to the state of laborers.*

This class, which has no property to afford it a residence, or to fix its destiny, which, according to the wages it can obtain, offers itself, indifferently, to the defence of the state, to the sea, to agriculture, or manufactures; this class is, necessarily, productive, because the whole amount of its annual labor is necessary for its subsistence; its earnings are, never, such as to allow it to be maintained, part of

* This idea has been adopted, from popular report, in England; but it certainly is not true in fact: indeed, property, in this country, is in too many hands to admit of its taking place to any extent; it being quite as likely, that large estates should be broken up and divided into smaller occupations, as that many small ones should be so circumstanced as to be brought together and consolidated. Large estates, indeed, when offered to sale, obviously obtain better prices, by being thus subdivided. That among the humblest class of farmers, few of whom possess capital, there should be instances of failure, and even instances of their being reduced to maintain their families, by day labor, is not to be wondered at. The same, necessarily, occurs in the lower branches of manufacture, where there is little command of capital; and the late more frequent occurrence of both these unfortunate circumstances is, surely, referrible to the general state of the country, as affecting agriculture and manufactures, rather than to the cause assumed.

M. Chateauvieux, however, throughout his work, advocates small farms rather than large ones. I have discussed this subject in another place, and have there endeavored to answer the objections usually adduced against large farms. See Holkham, its Agriculture, &c. 3d edition, pages 91 and following.—*T.*

the year without working, on the profits of the rest. It is doomed, by necessity, to perpetual labor, and for this reason, this class is, doubtlessly, eminently productive.

But it is wholly indifferent, both to public affairs and even to the labor, in which it is employed only mechanically. Human life presents no hope to laborers, for their future extends no further than to a few days. To sooth them in their labor, their imagination can offer nothing but fixed wages, which their most fatiguing exertions can, in no degree, increase. Deprived of the sources of maintenance, which they might have obtained from cultivating a little land, their wages, as laborers, are no longer equal to the maintenance of their families; since the enormous increase of taxes has changed, what, in England, used to regulate the price of day labor, namely, the price of wheat, and substituted the rate of taxes.

From the time, when the relations between the different classes of society were changed, even those which exist between labor and wages, between the price of wheat and the amount of taxes, it became necessary to have a legislative enactment analogous to the new order of things. The legislature has provided for it, and, extraordinary as it certainly is, it has been obliged, at one and the same time, to assist the laborer, who works on the farm, and the farmer who employs him.

To accomplish this, it has been necessary to pass two opposite laws, the operation of which is the very reverse of each other. By the first of these laws, a tax is imposed on the farmer, to compel his charitable contribution to the maintenance of his laborers. This, at present, amounts to seven millions sterling.* By the second, the price of corn is, forcibly, raised in favor of the farmer, by prohibiting its importation, below a certain minimum, to afford the farmer the means of paying the wages of these same laborers, while, by this prohibition, the bread which they eat is rendered dearer.

This regulation, absurd as it may appear, is, nevertheless, a wise measure, considering the time, and the country in which it has been made. It would, without doubt, have been much better, so to have directed political economy, as not to have required assistance, compulsively granted; but the evil, having taken place, the remedy has been applied by very intelligent men.

I have often heard it said, of what use is a tax for the poor? Would it not be more simple to raise the price of day labor? for the same end would be obtained, in a more prompt and equally direct manner. I have heard this reasoning, which is quite natural, from the English themselves; but

* It is now, I fear, rapidly increasing to, perhaps, double this sum. In the year 1774 it was only £665,362, and in the year 1792 it was £3,000,000.—*T.*

they have not considered the importance of the class of laborers, in the constitution of society, in England. Under their system, the price of labor would have been raised, by suppressing the tax; but the high wages would have been earned only by the robust, healthy, and active laborers, and they would, as they have always done, spend the overplus of their wages, and nothing would have been given to those whose weakness and infirmities rendered them incapable of maintaining their families. The tax, thus, neither alters the sum annually expended, in labor, on the land, nor that which the laborers receive, but it is distributed among them, not according to the work they have done, but according to their wants.

This law is the more proper, because, instead of having been suggested by a legislator, it has been the effect of necessity; it was not established at once, but gradually, and as it became necessary. It is an indispensible ingredient in the legislation of a state, where the rich have dispossessed the poor, and where they have no other means of subsistence, but the produce of their labor.

It is not so easy to shew the wisdom of the law, which prohibits the importation of grain. At the first view, it would seem to have been a measure of the landed interest in parliament, to enable their tenants to pay their rents. If this were their object, they accomplished it amidst the insults of

the people, and even of something more. Nevertheless, novel as this law is, in history, important motives may be urged in its favor.

It would make but little difference, whether the farmers pay their rent punctually or not, as the landlords, being wealthy, find various means of supplying the temporary inconvenience they experience, from the non-payment of their rent. This circumstance occurs, frequently, to landlords, without the least inconvenience to the public. But it is not the same with the cause which compels the farmer to delay his payments; because he is in a very different predicament, and because the part he fills in the state is important in a very different way.

The farmer, at a fixed rent, contracts a positive debt the moment he signs his lease; he becomes, at once, a debtor to his landlord, to whom he engages to pay the rent of the land; and a debtor to the land, to which he engages to make the necessary advances for its cultivation. He has no expectation of making his payments, but from sources which are necessarily contingent; since they depend on the combination of the rate of the markets, and the goodness of the seasons. It may, therefore, be possible, that a succession of bad years, or an immoderate importation of corn, may swallow up the farmers' capital, and ruin him at once, as he may be said to be born a debtor. This danger

is greater for the class of farmers than for any other trades-people, as they all deal in the same article, and have only one and the same source of profit.

This danger would be the more formidable in England, because the whole of its agricultural interest rests on this class only; and I will add, that it is the only country where this danger can be realized. First, because the produce of its agriculture is homogeneous, and but little varied: in other countries, when the corn fails, the wine compensates the loss; but in England this cannot be. The farmers appropriate a considerable part of their land to the support of cattle, and the common consumption of the farming establishment. All their exertions, all their manure, &c. are directed to the wheat crops, which come round once in four years. It is their most vendable article; if the price drop, or the crop fail, nothing can make up the loss. Secondly, the price of corn, in such a country as England, may, moreover, be much affected by the state of trade. It has not been sufficiently considered, that this influence is not felt on the whole crop of an extensive country, because a great portion is consumed at home; in England it is about half; in Italy four-fifths. It is, therefore, only on that part of it which is brought to market, that the state of commerce can have any influence in raising or depressing the price. In a country, in every

part open to commerce, and possessed, as in England, of immense capital, and the most extensive means of conveyance, it is clear that in speculating upon the importation of corn, it could command the price, and have such an influence on agriculture as to ruin the farmer.

The law which fixes the price, below which the importation of corn is prohibited, is, therefore, a judicious law, in the present situation of England; it is not only calculated to favor the rich proprietors, but to save that class of farmers on whom the rural prosperity of England alone depends.

Such, then, are the great advantages of this admirable system of political economy. I have not concealed its inconveniences, or rather its dangers, more correctly to express myself; since, in reality, there are no inconvenjences so great as when wheel-work moves without friction, and the least accident in its working may produce frightful consequences. But until time discovers the danger, the social edifice raised on this basis, strikes the eye with its eclat. England, by its movements, affects and agitates the whole world; it feeds it by the superabundance of its labor; it instructs it by its example.

Italy, more modest, leaves the world in peace. She is satisfied in the enjoyment of the gifts she has received from nature. She favors their developement by moderate exertion, with an enlightened system. She has continued, as an inheritance from

the Romans, the subdivision of land; the result of a republican system, and of the great population of that republic, a long time the sovereign of the world.

The state of society among the Romans being founded in slavery, its fall left Italy without laborers to cultivate the land, none remaining to work on the farms but those who had been manumised. But they had no capital, and could give no security to the proprietors who were willing to lease their estates to them. The proprietors and these freedmen made, then, a special contract, by which the latter engaged to cultivate the land, on condition of dividing its produce, at the end of the year, with the landlords.

This sort of administration, on a small scale, can never produce sufficient profit to the cultivator to admit the accumulation of capital. The metayers have, therefore, never been in a situation to change their manner of living, or their mode of cultivation. They have remained to the present time in the situation of metayers, and will remain so indefinitely; for they can neither enrich themselves, nor be impoverished or ruined, as they contract no debts and have no creditors.

The metayers enjoy a domestic establishment, provided by the terms of their leases, and are in possession of half of the articles produced on the farm. They are thus certain of an ample main-

tenance; it is true, they have little money in hand, and can never save any; but if they did it would be of little use to them, since they have no payments to make. The land, the proprietors, and the government, demand only their labor, and this they give readily, as they have a direct interest in the prosperous growth of the crops. In truth, and it is the only defect in the system, the metayers have but one object, that of cultivating, within the year, the land committed to their care, to feed and clothe their families with the produce; and this obtained, they may make holiday and rest themselves. For, on the one hand, they have no other employment within their reach; and on the other, they perform their annual task by labor always limited to the extent of the domain. In Italy, then, there is a loss of time and power. There is, however, less than formerly, for it furnishes three hundred thousand men to bear arms. Notwithstanding this, though the Italians are diligent and adroit, they lose much time which might be employed in labor, by the very nature of the rural system.

This loss, which if it could be calculated, would appear enormous, does not affect the prosperity of agriculture; because, of all branches of industry, it is the first served; laborers are numerous by birth; they are, every where, superabundant, except when government takes them off. Thus, in

Italy, agriculture, without any exertion, has as many hands as it requires: and the proprietors interested in the improvement of their estates, and in the produce, of which they participate, supply for these improvements, the capital of which they are the only possessors.

It is, therefore, not in agriculture, but in the manufacturing classes, that a want of the hands retained by agriculture is experienced. There are, in fact, but few workshops in Italy, open to industry; they are thinly scattered over the whole surface of the country. The large buildings, which, by the dispersion of the monks, were no longer occupied, and the low price of labor, induced some enterprizing persons to attempt the introduction of manufactures. They all failed at the end of a few years, and yet they seem to have had all the requisites for success. Situation, low price, intelligent workmen: within reach of the necessary material, and a price favorable to the sale of the articles; but all these advantages were paralyzed by the fault and unwillingness of the workmen.

The close and uniform labor, the wages at a fixed rate, which can be earned only by continued work, the want of those fortunate chances, which heaven seems to promise to the metayer in the happy climate of Italy, could not satisfy their lively imagination. The metayer knows that he can live upon the produce of his farm; in the first instance, it

secures to him food, and, what is more, hope. These two means of fortune satisfy him. He is secured even against misfortunes, which sometimes threaten him, for, in this case, the proprietor of the farm becomes a kind benefactor to him, ready to relieve his distress, although he himself participates in the unfortunate effects of it.

The scale, in which the population in Italy is classed, is not the same as that in England. Here there are but few day laborers, and a small number who hire farms. Almost the whole of these classes is included in that of the metayers. They contract immediately with the proprietors, who almost alone form the class of capitalists. A fifth of the population, alone, supplies the manufacturing and consuming classes. Agriculture, instead of constantly transferring to other classes of society its superabundant population, on the contrary, retains it. The result is, that, one after another, all the classes are absorbed; and that there is never, as in England, a surplus of population, constantly unemployed, and at liberty to engage in some new undertaking, to go to sea, or to emigrate.

The number and arrangement of the population in Italy have been, I believe, a long time, stationary, and they will be so still, for nothing threatens this order of things; it may continue indefinitely without giving any inquietude to the government. The whole of this numerous, of this immense class,

is lodged, clothed, and fed with absolute certainty, and by the very nature of its occupation. It is nearly equally spread over the whole surface of the country. It is happy in its freedom from care, in the beauty of the climate, and in the fertility of the soil. The manufacturing class, though small in number, often suffers. It is so deficient in skill, that notwithstanding the most favorable circumstances, it does not manufacture enough to exclude foreign articles, in respect to which it cannot attempt a competition. The Italians have relinquished their manufactures of silk and their fine wools. They have, in vain, attempted to manufacture their cotton. From the most exact calculations, they prefer selling the surplus of their gross produce, and buying, in exchange, the manufactures they stand in need of. There will soon remain, in Italy, only artificers and retale dealers. Agriculture is becoming their only manufacture, and will almost alone contribute to keep up the public wealth of Italy.

We may be convinced of this by travelling through it; we see beautiful fields and cities in decay. The depopulation of the latter has been, certainly one half since the middle of the seventeenth century. Milan and Leghorn are the only cities which preserve their ancient prosperity, while we see Rome, Venice, Ferrara, Pisa, and many others, depopulating, languishing, and approaching their end.

Neither agriculture nor manufactures acquire wealth from the profit on labor; it is, therefore, evident, that the principle of the system established in Italy is to economize the revenues obtained from the income of capitals; while that in England is applied to increase the profit produced by an addition of labor. Every thing, in these two countries, bears the stamp of each character. All is profusion in England, because it is there reproductive; all is parsimony in Italy, because private fortunes can be secured in no other way. One of these countries is constantly increasing; the other requires exertion to keep it stationary. In every part of Italy, where the great proprietors do not practise a rigid economy, they are soon ruined, and this must necessarily be the case, because they have scarcely any means of earning money. This is the actual state of almost all the great houses in Rome, an inevitable lot, if they neglect the precautions suggested by the genius of the nation.

Without donbt there was a time, a time of prosperity and exertion, when Italy acted the same part on the theatre of the world, which, at this time, raises England to distinction. At that time, to which it is gratifying to allude, Italy became, on the banks of the Tiber and the Arno, the entrepot to the commerce of the world. Its vessels were the only ones in Europe, freighted with the productions of Asia, and the wonderful exports of the

artisans of Florence. At that time the Italians gave to all the people of Europe designs for their clothes, and the forms of their ornaments. The treasures of the world were, then, collected in their hands; they were rich and powerful. Glory be rendered to them, a glory as durable as the monuments on which it rests. Glory be rendered to them, for they made a noble use of their prosperous fortune; they employed it, liberally, to the honor of their country.

LETTER XXIII.

GENEVA, NOVEMBER 15, 1813.

Sir,

THERE is an old saying, which taught us that agriculture flourished only in proportion to the number of hands employed in it. The example of England has disproved this opinion, with most of the axioms on which the ancient political economy rested. The state of society in Italy, it is true, shews that agriculture may flourish with a superabundance of hands. But it is well known that there may be an excess of these, and that it tends, on the contrary, to the general prosperity of the state, to reduce to its minimum each of the working classes of society. This reduction, effected by the simple division of labor, raises to its maximum the profit produced by the whole labor of each class, at the same time, that it constantly leaves disposeable hands, capable of being employed in each of the new branches of industry with which the arts enrich civilization.

can be no doubt that the system adopted in England has made that country richer. This system contributes, with much energy, to the developement of universal civilization, by continually adding to the nomenclature of the works of industry. The Italian population, on the contrary, if I may so express myself, has put a seal on the pages of its history, and seems like a faithful heir, unwilling to extend the civilization transmitted to it by its ancestors.

Their steadiness in the system which regulates their social state, cannot be considered as a fault in the Italians, for, on examination, it presents so many advantages, that they ought to reflect a long time before they exchange it for another: it would even seem that instead of relinquishing the system, it is every day more and more confirmed, and established in a manner still more exclusive.

I think it right to give, here, a short analysis of the system on which the social arrangement of Italy is founded. A private history of the Italian nation will, in some degree, result from this analysis, in which will be exhibited a sketch of the habits, manners, and interests of each of the classes of population.

It is composed of five classes, which may be placed in the following order:

First.—That of cultivators, who are not proprietors.

Second.—That of proprietors—possidenti.

Third.—That of merchants—mercanti.

Fourth.—The industrious class—artisans, manufacturers, &c.

Fifth.—The unproductive class—salaried civil and military persons, clergy, &c.

1st. I have so repeatedly described the manners and the labors of the country people of Italy, that I shall have little to add here.

This class, alone, includes almost four-fifths of the population, and thus amounts to more than thirteen millions of individuals. It is assuredly important to support their existence and promote their welfare; and it appears to me that the institutions have succeeded in effecting it.

This system, indeed, does not afford these people any chance of quitting their caste, and thus has nothing to excite their ambition. It does not promise them wealth, for it scarcely admits a scanty circulation of specie; but it secures to the metayer the gratuitous enjoyment of commodious lodging, and a plentiful subsistence. The cultivators, who receive half the produce, have, thus, little ready money, but they never have debts and know nothing of creditors. They never accumulate capital, and of course they cannot rise from their situation. They are thus free, at once, from anxiety and ambition; on their part they feel a constant and deep interest in the employment in which they are

The class of cultivators is the source whence springs the surplus of population, destined to keep up all the other branches of industry. The system of rural administration, in every state, determines, then, the direction in which the population should be distributed. It proceeds, in England, from agriculture to manufactures; in Italy it is centred and retained in agriculture. It follows then, that England is influenced by the system of the constant accumulation of the profit on labor, and Italy by that of a principle of conservation ever stationary.

This double instance shews us that the base on which the economy of society rests, is found in the elementary principle of the division of lands, and of the system of their rural administration, since they determine the order in society in which the different classes of the nation arrange themselves.

The general attitude which every nation assumes, or continues, is regulated by the social order which is there established. One has remained principally agricultural; it abounds in gross produce, it purchases with the price obtained for it, the manufactures of which it stands in need. Another is principally manufacturing: it collects from different places raw materials to be manufactured and resold with the profit of labor upon them. A third is induced to traverse the ocean, because it has no land to cultivate. France, the only country in Europe, distinguished by its situation, its

extent, and the genius of its inhabitants, is disposed to assume the triple character of an agricultural, a manufacturing, and a maritime nation. She has nothing exclusive, and to the present time, she has not raised these branches of industry beyond mediocrity. She is not so well cultivated as Italy; is less ingenious in her manufactures than England; she has succeeded less at sea than Holland.

The events of late years have compelled France, for a time, to suspend her maritime system; and there is no doubt that her manufacturing system has much profited by it. I am convinced that it would be much better for her, never again to attempt a conflict at sea; for the effort would serve only to withdraw the capital necessary for manufactures and agriculture; and notwithstanding all her exertions, she will always remain, on the ocean, inferior to the Americans, the Dutch, and the English. Great and real profits can only arise from those branches of industry in which a nation excels, for it is in this instance only that competition ceases to operate, and that by general consent an exclusive preference is obtained.

Experience proves that a nation may prosper by cultivating only one branch of industry, for we see, I acknowledge with astonishment, that the population in Italy, supported by the system of agriculture, is equal to that which England supports by the union of manufactures and agriculture. There

always the same. The metayer, as M. Barante observed in La Vendée, had nothing to gain by the revolution; it could neither give nor take away any thing. He remained not less attached to the nobility, because he never considered them as such, but only as the proprietors of the farms.

There is, in short, in the Italian nobility, something which belongs to the national manners, and which has favored them in the revolution. Their appearance did not distinguish them from the rest of the nation. There is not, in the language or manners of Italy, that delicacy of expression, nor that refinement in the conveniences of life, of which the higher classes of France exhibit a perfect model. These shades are unknown in Italy. Every one expresses himself alike; there is only one mode of saluting and of addressing. It is not suspected that there are degrees in the accommodations of society: these undefinable impressions lose themselves in a uniform tint, and which appears to us rather familiar.

There was, thus, nothing of incivility in the intercourse between the nobility and the lower classes. The latter had no objection to them; they were accustomed to give them their titles, which they considered as part of their property: they never withheld it from them, and when the revolution obliged every one to use the term citizen, they called the nobles, citizen marquis, &c.

to satisfy, at the same time, the law and their conscience.

In the social arrangement, the nobility can, therefore, never be considered as a separate class, because it is completely absorbed in the class of possidenti. On the other hand, the regular clergy must be taken from this class, as, before the revolution, they filled a considerable place, as mainmortable proprietors. This kind of property has been almost totally sold; the lay possidenti are proportionately increased.

The real estate of the nation is thus in the hands of only one class of the population. The proprietors' rent is not paid in money, but in kind, as they divide the productions of the land with the metayers. The possidenti do not consider their estates as capitals, at fixed rents, but as a property, the income of which varies, according to the seasons and the state of the markets. They are interested in every circumstance connected with cultivation, and instead of being strangers to their estates, their continued attention is directed to them, and it is the sole employment of most of the proprietors in Italy.

Their share of the produce of the land is of more value, than that which they would receive from fixed rents, which never amount to half of the gross produce. Almost all the proprietors spend this income in cities; it is a natural consequence of the subdivision of estates, and of their being small. In

engaged. It has nothing uncertain in it, for they have only to wait until harvest to partake of its produce. There is nothing compulsory in the work of their hands, because hope and the love of gain, each day, reanimate the laborer, and remove the effect of his fatigues. The young female who gathers, in the dew, the leaves of the mulberry tree, thinks already of the silk handkerchief with which she shall be dressed on holidays. Her mother, while peeling her hemp, sees there the linen with which she shall supply her house; and the father of the family, in stooping under the grapes which hang from his bowers, thinks of the wine which is to cheer his older years.

You see, Sir, that the immediate effect of the subdivision of land, and the renting it at half the produce, has made thirteen millions of individuals participate in the feelings which belong to the love of property. Feelings often mixed with pain, but which, nevertheless, have been an object of ambition from the earliest period of the world.

There must, necessarily, be enjoyment in a life in which are blended hope and freedom from care, because the cultivators are unwilling to quit it. There is no other demand upon them than labor; all the incumbrances on property belong to the proprietor. He is urged, even by his own interest, to assist his metayer when under misfortune. These succours are not alms, but encouragements

to labor, and to the improvement of the estate. It is an assistance for the following year, the agriculture of which annually enriches itself.

2d. I will include the proprietors of all the soil in Italy, in one class, considering it divided between the nobility and the burgeoise. But as the nobility act no peculiar part in the social state, and have no other advantages than those of fortune and property in land, I thought it right to unite with them that part of the bourgeoisé which enjoys the same advantages.

When there were still oligarchic republics in Italy, the patriciat formed a class, distinguished by power and privileges; but since the fall of these states, these families, as well as all others, are comprehended in the general class of possidenti.

The reduction of the nobility into the common class of citizens, effected by the revolution, was scarcely perceptible in Italy. This may be attributed to the circumstances which placed the nobility, with respect to the people, in a relation very different from that in which they were in France. They had little to lose in Italy, because, except in the kingdom of Naples, they scarcely enjoyed any privileges. The part of the people which depended upon them, that is to say, the farmers, were not in relation of vassal to lord, but of metayer to landlord. These relations are never hostile, but always friendly; their interests being

England, it is fortunate that the landed proprietors are in the habit of living upon their estates, to support the country population; for the cities are sufficiently peopled by manufacturers. They would be deserted, in Italy, if the capitalists did not reside in them. Their tastes and manners, moreover, prevent their living in the country. They are satisfied with looking over their farms, as an object of amusement, as well as interest. They, thus, inform themselves of what concerns the management of their estates, and the comfort of the metayers. They direct the repairs of the house, or the clearing of a canal, and mark their visit by some gift or act of kindness.

After harvest, the steward visits the farm, to make a division of the crop. The metayer engages to convey the landlord's share to the city. It is deposited in the large magazines, appropriated to this purpose, in the palace. The proprietor then goes to the merchant, to sell the whole produce of his different farms.

Their rent, or real produce, is variable, on account of the taxes, the accidents to which sheep are liable, the repairs, &c. The proprietor is, consequently, under the necessity of being economical, that he may always have a fund in reserve; for if obliged to borrow, in order to cover his losses, he is ruined in a few years. A debt is nothing in England; in Italy it is fatal. Proprietors, formerly,

often ruined themselves by a misapplied ostentation. It consisted, principally, in a set of servants, as disgusting as useless. It has been given up, and nothing remains of this ancient splendor, but the abuse of equipages. I have seen some mean sea-cities, where thirty wretched carriages were figuring on the corse, drawn by the most ordinary horses.

The extravagant use of carriages is not considered, in Italy, as a luxury, but as a thing of the first necessity. Every country has, in the same way, some special object of expense and partiality, which bears the name of luxury in those places only where it is not used. A man in France, who has good property, will ride in a fiacre; in Italy he rides in a coach, though, at home, he has only four straw-bottomed chairs to sit upon, for no where are apartments so badly furnished as in Italy. In warm countries, apartments are not of much importance in the habits of life.

The fortune of capitalists, in Italy, is, thus, of considerable solidity, and they are perfectly secure of preserving it; but their income must still be economised. The genius of the nation is willingly directed to economy; but there result from it, in the social order, certain necessary consequences, that is to say, there is little consumption, few advantages, and few losses.

This analysis leads us to consider a great question, in political economy, which seems, at this

time, to be decided by experiment, that is to say, to ascertain whether the destruction of the convents has really conferred on the public prosperity, the advantages predicted by the economists, in the eighteenth century.

They founded their predictions on the example of the Protestant states, in which wealth accumulated more than in those which followed the Catholic worship; but they did not sufficiently take into consideration, that over and above the dispersion of the monks, the reformation had suppressed fifty holidays, an enormous acquisition to labor; and, secondly, that the reformation carried with it, almost every where, a great change in the economical institutions by which industry profited.

The experiment of the destruction of monasteries has been made some years, and I should think, for ever, in Italy and France. The result may, already, be appreciated; it is very curious.

In Italy it has been absolutely null. The main-mortables managed their numerous estates, in the same manner as all other proprietors. The same metayers remain upon them, and they cultivate them neither better nor worse; they pay rent to a new possessor, that is all. The buildings used as cloisters, fell, for the most part, to ruin, in consequence of not being applied to any use. In fact, the class of possidenti is increased, by a number of small capitalists, sprung up from the ranks of

commerce, or the law; but this change has been more prejudicial than advantageous to the state, since, by a single law, all the capital belonging to the mainmortables has been taken from the monks, to substitute an equal capital, which has been withdrawn from circulation, where it was employed in manufactures, to be vested in land.

With regard to the great benefit to be derived, by society, from the return of the monks into its common classes, it has, hitherto, been counterbalanced, for the conscription has swallowed up a greater number of men than the convents.

In France, things have not gone on quite in the same way; it was not necessary to withdraw from circulation a useful capital, to acquire the national domains. They were sold at a low price, and paid for in assignats, which were become so common, that no one knew what to do with them; they were used in these purchases, and thus a very favorable method was found of converting into capital an ephemeral property.

In the place of the monks, very few of whom merged into the different ranks of society, a great number of proprietors were created; the greater part of whom do themselves the work of the farms, and for their own profit. They belong to that class of proprietor farmers so numerous in France, and entirely unknown in England, as well as in Italy.

It is probable, in time, these families may enjoy the state of prosperity which they expect to derive from their new situations, but, at present, they have done nothing for the improvement of agriculture. The national property is not in sufficient estimation in public opinion, to have attracted the manufacturing capital necessary to call forth its real value. This is every where perceptible in France. It is neglected, the buildings are badly kept up, the inclosures broken down, the young trees in the orchards destroyed, the dressed vines in ruins. We see, every where, the purchasers too much in haste to take possession, the natural consequence of the circumstances in which they were placed.

In short, it appears incontestible that within the last twenty years the lay purchasers have cultivated the land worse than when it was in the hands of the monks.

Even then, when time, which influences every thing, shall have given the purchasers a secure possession, I doubt whether the class of proprietor cultivators will effect any useful improvements in the land. Every thing requisite is wanting to accomplish it, talent and capital. These little farmers seem placed in a country to check the progress of innovations, and to prevent all improvement in agriculture.

It cannot, however, be doubted, that there has been a considerable improvement in France, but

it is entirely produced by persons who have been thrown out of their situations by the revolution, and whose exertions and leisure have been directed to agriculture. They have spread a taste for it from one to another, in consequence of the success of their experiments; but still I cannot think it has been effected by throwing national domains into the capital of the nation.

In one only respect has it been useful; the vacant convents have been occupied in manufactures, where they have been well accommodated at a moderate price; and the success obtained in them has, in a great part, been attributable to this circumstance.

3d. By the term mercanti, the Italians mean all persons engaged in any kind of commerce, that is to say, bankers, merchants, and retale shopkeepers.

Trade is always limited by the amount of local consumption, at least when it has not the advantages obtained by entrepots. Consumption is limited in an economical country, like Italy, especially since it has lost the advantage of being an entrepot. As, however, the surplus of its gross produce is exported, and, as in return, the manufactures which it requires are purchased, a considerable exchange of merchandize takes place in its ports.

Trade is singularly secure, and easily carried on, in the ports of Italy. It consists in exchanging

for colonial goods and manufactured articles, according to a tariff, but little varying, wheat, rice, oil, silk, wool, and cotton, the surplus of which is exported.

The capitals acquired by commerce, are, as soon as possible, invested in land. The class of proprietors taking precedence of merchants, it is natural that their object should be to introduce themselves into it, by the wealth which they have acquired. Agriculture, in Italy, attracts every thing, and, for this reason, it alone flourishes.

4th. The class of persons who live by manufacturing labor, is generally poor; they live, usually, in cities, where the demand for their labor is in proportion to the consumption: this consumption appears every day to decline, if we may judge by the depopulation of most of the cities, and by the decline of many manufacturers, experienced every year; for poverty, and the depopulation of the manufacturing classes, are in proportion to each other. It is difficult to explain the principle, on which all the workmen, born with abilities, are become unskilful and void of invention. It can be attributed only to the general decline of the manufacturing arts in Italy. When it has advanced to a certain point, emulation, hope, and courage, are lost; on the contrary, while industry, as in England, is increasing, we are, every day, surprised at the unexpected progress of all the economic arts.

Most travellers have judged of the prosperity of Italy, from seeing this class in the towns in which they lived. They have, thence, represented Italy as a country whose decline was cancelling it from the list of nations, and they have ventured to compare it with Spain. These travellers neither examined the country, nor made themselves acquainted with the basis of its social system; for they would have seen, that though withdrawn from the cities, its prosperity was still to be found in its agriculture.

But it is an error, into which strangers, who only visit cities, must easily fall. It requires a more profound research, to discover the secret treasures of a nation, than to perceive its imperfections.

5th. In the unproductive class are comprehended all those who are salaried by the state, civil and military officers, the clergy, lawyers, &c. The rank which these hold in society is, indeed, very different; but with respect to political economy, they who fill these different employments are placed in the same class.

In this order, the clergy, who, in Italy, occupy one of the first places, have been greatly reduced by the revolution, while the military has been much increased. Italy, at one time, had three hundred thousand men under its standard, of which, eighty thousand were from the kingdon of Naples, eighty thousand from the kingdom of Italy, and a hundred and forty thousand from French Italy. This army,

enormous as it appears, was, however, raised by two per cent. on the total population. Nevertheless the raising this army, and the accidents to which it has been exposed, form the greatest historical event that has affected Italy for two centuries, and the consequences of which may be of the utmost importance.

It was, indeed, a singular spectacle to see the Italian nation, at the same time, decree the suppression of convents and the formation of an army. Equally surprizing is the facility with which the military laws have been enforced; and the best soldiers in the world have borne testimony to the excellent manner in which the Italians have conducted themselves in the field of battle.

The male strength of nations is nearly the same among different people, and in all climates; but it must be called into action by the influence of the imagination, of interest, and the passions. This impulse is the more easily given, because there is in man an instinct of imitation, which acts upon him imperceptibly, as it were by contagion, and which is communicated as rapidly as unexpectedly. I was in Italy in 1791, and no one then would have suspected, that it would have raised, ten years after, three hundred thousand soldiers. The prophet who should have foretold it, would have been considered an idiot, and yet we have seen the phæno-

menon realized. The necessary consequence will be, that Italy will assume a new character, the history of which will not be written but by succeeding generations.

The clergy are always inclined to support old institutions, because this is a conduct peculiar to men who act more from principle than passion. The clergy submitted in Italy with dignity. They have, with much constancy, followed the steps of the Pontiff, whose great character has shone more as a prisoner than on the throne.

Lawyers abound in Italy, the consequence of so many petty sovereignties, and that of the subdivision of so many small domains; and it is particularly the consequence of the establishment of so many systems of canals, which, in their course, pass through so many different properties. This admirable system of irrigation has only one disadvantage, it is the source of a multitude of law suits.

You may, besides, easily conceive that many of the rich proprietors, and who are not brought up to business, will take a pleasure in attending these courts. It is an attracting occupation. At all times it has had its admirers, and more in Italy than any where else, because it agrees, in every respect, with the genius of the nation.

The lawyers in Italy have experienced a crisis,

not unlike that which took place in the tower of Babel, but they have extricated themselves from it a little better. In 1808, if I mistake not, a decree appeared, which ordered the lawyers, in the departments beyond the Alps, to write and plead in French, and that within twenty-four hours. They could not hesitate, for it was not a subject of choice. It was saying to the palsied man, take up thy bed and walk. The counsellors did, indeed, speak, but I leave you to judge in what manner: they mixed together Italian, French, Latin, the genders, cases, and terminations; never was there such a jargon. The Italian pleaders, however, apprehensive as they were, got to the end of the year, and their affairs did not suffer much from it.

I have thus examined the principal traits of the five classes, into which I have divided the population of Italy.

You must have remarked, that if there be nothing that promises great sources of benefit to the state, there are none which, as in England, can, in its present crisis, give inquietude to the legislature. All the individuals who compose these classes have a fixed situation and a certain maintenance. The two most numerous orders, those of proprietors and those of cultivators, have, for their fortune, the whole produce of the earth.

They enjoy it with certainty; the one by the right of possession, the other by that which they acquire under the terms of their leases. The situation of the two classes is very favorable, for the one attracts to it all the capital, and the other possesses all the manual power.

The manufacturing classes are generally diminishing. The more this kind of industry is improved in other countries, the more is their competition unfavorable to that of Italy. This effect has been constant for the two last ages, and there remains, in Italy, that kind of local manufacture only, the produce of which cannot be exported, and which is indispensible to the wants of life.

Italy is thus become, within the two last centuries, esssentially, I may say, wholly agricultural. It can be considered in no other view in the general economy of Europe. Perhaps, in its political relations, it must be equally considered under a new point of view; perhaps, ere long, the Italian nation may emerge from its political nullity, to be ranked among nations, who distinguish themselves in the annals of the world.

There would be nothing new or wonderful in this. Nothing makes me doubt that the Italian nation will aggrandise itself anew; for there is none so favored by heaven. It partakes of the prudence of the eastern world, and of the activity of

Europeans. No country possesses the same degree of imitative genius, by which the movements of the passions and the beauties of nature can be so well expressed. There is none which has so happily conceived and developed the traits which raise the character of man upon the earth.

It is to the Italians that Europe is indebted for the two ages in which civilization spread its influence over it; for we are too apt to forget that they were formerly citizens of Rome. It was equally the Italians, who, in the fifteenth century, again gave to that Europe the models of all she now possesses of the sublime and the graceful. In these latter times the Italians have risen from a long sleep; they are awakened at the sound of national glory and independence, and their actions have been greater than our opinion of them would have led us to suppose.

The hopes which they had conceived have not, indeed, been yet realised, as nothing is so difficult as to reconcile all the interests which affect the social state of a people; but their name is rescued from oblivion, and this is an important step for a nation aspiring to distinction.

I have endeavoured to describe to you the rural state of Italy, and also the processes by which the land is cultivated. I have endeavored to shew its consequences on the political and social state of

the country. I have had no other object, and if you think I have succeeded, you will afford me a satisfaction, respecting this work, which I am, myself, far from experiencing.

I am, &c.

PUBLISHED BY DR. RIGBY.

1. An Essay on the Uterine Hœmorrhage which precedes the Delivery of the full-grown Fœtus, illustrated with Cases.—8vo. First Edit. 1776. Fifth Edit. 1811.

2. An Essay on the Use of the Red Peruvian Bark in the Cure of Intermittents.—8vo. 1783.

3. Charitable Inoculation of the Poor.—8vo. 1783.

4. An Essay on the Theory of the Production of Animal Heat, and on its Application in the Treatment of cutaneous Eruptions, Inflammations, and some other Diseases.—8vo. 1785.

5. An Account of Mr. James Deeker's Two Aerial Ascensions from the City of Norwich.—8vo. 1785.

6. Chemical Observations on Sugar.—8vo. 1788.

7. Reports of the Special Provision Committee appointed by the Court of Guardians in the City of Norwich, with an Account of the Savings which have been produced by the late Regulations in the Diet of the Workhouse, exhibiting some important Facts respecting the Œconomy of those Establishments.—8vo. 1788.

8. Further Facts relating to the Care of the Poor, and the Management of the Workhouse, in the City of Norwich, being a Sequel to a former Publication.—8vo. 1812.

9. Report of the Norwich Pauper Vaccination, from August 10, 1812, to August 10, 1813.—8vo. 1813.

10. Suggestions for an Improved and Extended Cultivation of Mangel Wurzel.—8vo. 1815.

11. Holkham, its Agriculture, &c.—8vo. Third Edit. 1818.

BURKS AND KINNEBROOK,
PRINTERS, NORWICH.

00032034

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016